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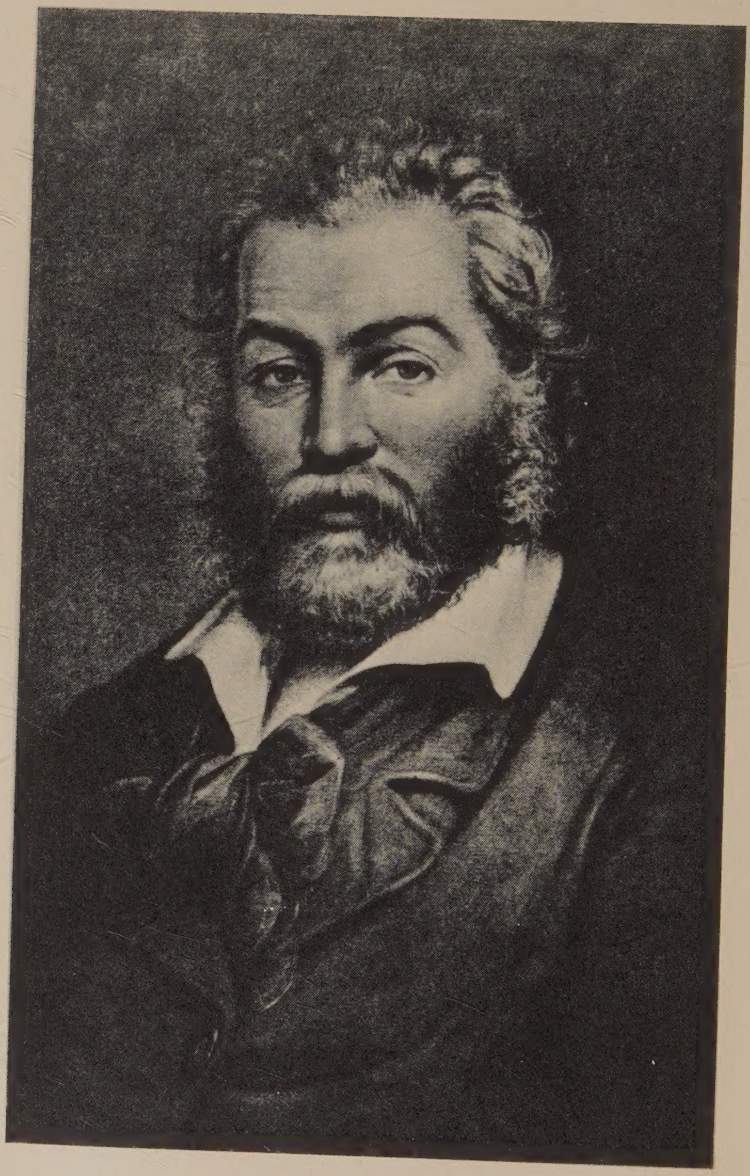

Walt Whitman, 1859
From the painting by Charles Hine. Owned by J. H. Johnston, Esq., Brooklyn, N. Y.

THE COMPLETE WRITINGS OF WALT WHITMAN

Issued under the editorial supervision of his Literary Executors, Richard Maurice Bucke, Thomas B. Harned, and Horace L. Traubel

With additional bibliographical and critical material prepared by Oscar Lovell Triggs, Ph.D.

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THE WRITINGS OF WALT WHITMAN

THE

COMPLETE PROSE WORKS

OF

WALT WHITMAN

VOLUME V

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press
1902

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CALAMUS

A SERIES OF LETTERS WRITTEN DURING THE YEARS 1868–1880 BY WALT WHITMAN TO A YOUNG FRIEND (PETER DOYLE)

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

RICHARD MAURICE BUCKE, M.D.

ONE OF WHITMAN'S LITERARY EXECUTORS

"Publish my name and hang up my picture as that of
the tenderest lover,
The friend, the lover's portrait of whom his friend his
lover was fondest,
Who was not proud of his songs but of the measureless
ocean of love within him and freely poured it forth."

LEAVES OF GRASS (Ed'n 1892), p. 102.

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Written on the fly leaf of a copy of "Specimen Days" sent to Peter Doyle at Washington, June, 1883.

Pete do you remember — (of course you do — I do well) — those great long jovial walks we had at times for years (1866–'72) out of Washington City — often moonlight nights, 'way to "Good Hope"; or, Sundays, up and down the Potomac shores, one side or the other, sometimes ten miles at a stretch? Or when you work'd on the horse-cars, and I waited for you, coming home late together — or resting and chatting at the Market, corner 7th Street and the Avenue, and eating those nice musk or watermelons? Or during my tedious sickness and first paralysis ('73) how you used to come to my solitary garret room and make up my bed, and enliven me and chat for an hour or so — or perhaps go out and get the medicines Dr. Drinkard had order'd for me — before you went on duty? . . . Give my love to dear Mrs. and Mr. Nash, and tell them I have not forgotten them, and never will.

W. W.

I have been privileged to read a series of letters addressed by Whitman to a young man, whom I will call P., and who was tenderly beloved by him. They throw a flood of light upon *Calamus,* and are superior to any commentary. It is greatly to be hoped that they may be published. Whitman, it seems, met P. at Washington not long before the year 1869 when the lad was about eighteen years of age. They soon became attached, Whitman's friendship being returned with at least equal warmth by P. The letters breathe a purity and simplicity of affection, a naïveté and reasonableness, which are very remarkable considering the unmistakable intensity of the emotion. Throughout them, Whitman shows the tenderest and wisest care for his young friend's welfare, helps him in material ways, and bestows upon him the best advice, the heartiest encouragement, without betraying any sign of patronage or preaching. Illness soon attacked Walt. He retired to Camden, and P., who was employed as "baggage-master on the freight trains" of a railway, was for long unable to visit him. There is something very wistful in the words addressed from a distance by the aging poet to this "son of responding kisses." I regret that we do not possess P.'s answers. Yet, probably, to most readers, they would not appear highly interesting; for it is clear he was only an artless and uncultured workman.—JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS in *Walt Whitman—A Study*. pp.78, 79.

Interview with Peter Doyle

Interview with Peter Doyle

In May, 1895, in company with Horace L. Traubel, I visited Doyle, whom I had known for years but had not seen for a long time. I explained to him that it was my intention to publish these letters and asked him if he felt there was any insuperable objection? He first inquired—"Of what use are they?" and then, upon my assurance that (in some measure) they would do for the world the same service they had done for him, he further inquired: "Do you think Walt, if he were here, if he could be asked, would be willing? Whereupon, I, answering affirmatively, was told that I should "go ahead," doing that which seemed to me best, since he felt "entirely safe" in my hands. It was likewise by Doyle's consent that Mr. Traubel took notes of the conversation that ensued, and it is only after his revision that these are printed in this volume. The conversation was desultory but serves to show what manner of man Doyle is and by what sacred ties he feels himself still indissolubly bound to Whitman. Mr. Doyle is reported almost absolutely in his own words. He said:—

I was born in 1847, in Ireland, and was about two years old when brought to America. Father was a blacksmith. We lived our first years in America at Alexandria, Virginia. Bad times came on in 1856–7. Father went to Richmond, where he had been offered a place in an iron foundry. While there I was a member of the Fayette Artillery, and when the war broke out I entered the Confederate Army. Getting my parole in Washington, forced to look out for myself, I hung round that region with no particular object in view. I might have been more successful somewhere else, but I was there, and so I just stuck to the case as it was. I became a horse-car conductor. This other business came later on. Yes, I will talk of Walt, nothing suits me better. I will commence anywhere. When you are tired stop me. Walt never used to take much to newspaper men in the old time. There were some few in Washington he rather favored. They always made a good deal of him, of course — that is, they came to him often enough for news or opinions or such stuff. He could shut a man off in the best style, you know. He had a freezing way in him — yet was never harsh. But people got to know that he meant what he said. He said "no" and "no" it was. I remember one special night, we met a half-loaded fellow with some of his journalist friends — a newspaper man, since prominent, who was then pretty well acquainted with Walt. This man

was offensively familiar with Walt — insisted on introducing his friends, and all that. Walt held him off — froze him out — would not be introduced. It was simply impossible for the intruder to make his point. Now, Walt was always dignified — simple enough, too — and this is a sample of the manner he showed to all alike, famous or plain folks, who stepped across what he thought his private border-line.

How different Walt was then in Washington from the Walt you knew in the later years! You would not believe it. He was an athlete — great, great. I knew him to do wonderful lifting, running, walking. You ask where I first met him? It is a curious story. We felt to each other at once. I was a conductor. The night was very stormy,— he had been over to see Burroughs before he came down to take the car — the storm was awful. Walt had his blanket — it was thrown round his shoulders — he seemed like an old sea-captain. He was the only passenger, it was a lonely night, so I thought I would go in and talk with him. Something in me made me do it and something in him drew me that way. He used to say there was something in me had the same effect on him. Anyway, I went into the car. We were familiar at once — I put my hand on his knee — we understood. He did not get out at the end of the trip — in fact went all the way back with me. I think the year of this was 1866. From that time on we

were the biggest sort of friends. I stayed in Washington until 1872, when I went on the Pennsylvania Railroad. Walt was then in the Attorney-General's office. I would frequently go out to the Treasury to see Walt; Hubley Ashton was commonly there — he would be leaning familiarly on the desk where Walt would be writing. They were fast friends — talked a good deal together. Walt rode with me often — often at noon, always at night. He rode round with me on the last trip — sometimes rode for several trips. Everybody knew him. He had a way of taking the measure of the driver's hands — had calf-skin gloves made for them every winter in Georgetown — these gloves were his personal presents to the men. He saluted the men on the other cars as we passed — threw up his hand. They cried to him, "Hullo, Walt!" and he would reply, "Ah, there!" or something like. He was welcome always as the flowers in May. Everybody appreciated his attentions, and he seemed to appreciate our attentions to him. Teach the boys to read, write, and cipher? I never heard of, or saw that. There must be some mistake. He did not make much of what people call learning. But he gave us papers, books, and other such articles, too. In his habits he was very temperate. He did not smoke. People seemed to think it odd that he did n't, for everybody in Washington smoked. But he seemed to have a positive dislike for tobacco. He was a very moderate drinker. You might have

thought something different, to see the ruddiness of his complexion — but his complexion had no whiskey in it. We might take a drink or two together occasionally — nothing more. It was our practice to go to a hotel on Washington Avenue after I was done with my car. I remember the place well — there on the corner. Like as not I would go to sleep — lay my head on my hands on the table. Walt would stay there, wait, watch, keep me undisturbed — would wake me up when the hour of closing came. In his eating he was vigorous, had a big appetite, but was simple in his tastes, not caring for any great dishes.

I never knew a case of Walt's being bothered up by a woman. In fact, he had nothing special to do with any woman except Mrs. O'Connor and Mrs. Burroughs. His disposition was different. Woman in that sense never came into his head. Walt was too clean, he hated anything which was not clean. No trace of any kind of dissipation in him. I ought to know about him those years — we were awful close together. In the afternoon I would go up to the Treasury building and wait for him to get through if he was busy. Then we'd stroll out together, often without any plan, going wherever we happened to get. This occurred days in and out, months running. Towards women generally Walt had a good way — he very easily attracted them. But he did that with men, too. And it was an irresistible attraction. I've

had many tell me — men and women. He had an easy, gentle way — the same for all, no matter who they were or what their sex.

Walt was not at the theatre the night Lincoln was shot. It was me he got all that from in the book — they are almost my words. I heard that the President and his wife would be present and made up my mind to go. There was a great crowd in the building. I got into the second gallery. There was nothing extraordinary in the performance. I saw everything on the stage and was in a good position to see the President's box. I heard the pistol shot. I had no idea what it was, what it meant — it was sort of muffled. I really knew nothing of what had occurred until Mrs. Lincoln leaned out of the box and cried, "The President is shot!" I need n't tell you what I felt then, or saw. It is all put down in Walt's piece — that piece is exactly right. I saw Booth on the cushion of the box, saw him jump over, saw him catch his foot, which turned, saw him fall on the stage. He got up on his feet, cried out something which I could not hear for the hubbub and disappeared. I suppose I lingered almost the last person. A soldier came into the gallery, saw me still there, called to me: "Get out of here! we 're going to burn this damned building down!" I said: "If that is so, I 'll get out!"

We took great walks together — off towards or to Alexandria, often. We went plodding along the

road, Walt always whistling or singing. We would talk of ordinary matters. He would recite poetry, especially Shakespeare — he would hum airs or shout in the woods. He was always active, happy, cheerful, good-natured. Many of our walks were taken at night. He never seemed to tire. When we got to the ferry opposite Alexandria I would say to myself, "I 'll draw the line here — I won't go a step further." But he would take everything for granted — we would cross the river and walk back home on the other side. Walt knew all about the stars. He was eloquent when he talked of them. It was surprising what he knew of the operas, too, and the concerts of the Marine Band always tempted him. He never failed these concerts — we usually strayed in there together. The old man Scala led the band. He used to play a piece called *The Rival Birds* — Walt could get it off almost as good as the band.

He was a long time after me to go to New York, while his mother was alive. I asked him: "Will we stop there with your mother?" He was a little doubtful about that. We both stayed in Jersey City. The Whitmans lived on Portland Avenue. We took our dinner with Mrs. Whitman. We would take a bus-ride in the morning — then go to Brooklyn and have dinner. After we had had our dinner she would always say — "Now take a long walk to aid digestion." Mrs. Whitman was a lovely woman.

There were just the three of us eating together. Walt and I had a week of it there in New York that time. It was always impressed upon my mind—the opera he took me to see—*Polyato*. All the omnibus drivers knew him. We always climbed up to the top of the busses, our heels hanging over.

Yes, Walt often spoke to me of his books. I would tell him "I don't know what you are trying to get at." And this is the idea I would always arrive at from his reply. All other peoples in the world have had their representatives in literature: here is a great big race with no representative. He would undertake to furnish that representative. It was also his object to get a real human being into a book. This had never been done before. These were the two things he tried to impress upon me every time we talked of books—especially of his books. Walt used often to put a piece in Forney's Washington *Chronicle*. We never really talked about politics. I was a Catholic—am still supposed to be one. But I have not been to church for so many years I would not know what to do there. He had pretty vigorous ideas on religion, but he never said anything slighting the church. I don't know if he felt different from what he spoke. He never went to church—did n't like form, ceremonies—did n't seem to favor preachers at all. I asked him about the hereafter. "There must be something," he said—"there can't be a locomotive unless there

is somebody to run it." I have heard him say that if a person was a right kind of person — and I guess he thought all persons right kind of persons — he could n't be destroyed in the next world or this.

Dollars and cents had no weight with Walt at all. He did n't spend recklessly, but he spent everything—mostly on other people. Money was a thing he did n't think of as other people thought of it. It came and went, that was all there was to it. He did n't buy many books, but I remember that once he bought a set of Alexander Dumas, which afterward disappeared, I could not tell where, probably it was given away.

I have Walt's raglan here [*goes to closet—puts it on*], I now and then put it on, lay down, think I am in the old times. Then he is with me again. It 's the only thing I kept amongst many old things. When I get it on and stretched out on the old sofa I am very well contented. It is like Aladdin's lamp. I do not ever for a minute lose the old man. He is always near by. When I am in trouble—in a crisis —I ask myself, "What would Walt have done under these circumstances?" and whatever I decide Walt would have done that I do.

Walt's mood was very even, but I saw him mad as a March hare one night. He was on the hind end of my car, near him stood an old fellow (a carpet-bag senator — I don't know his name) — near-sighted, wore glasses, peevish, lantern-jawed, dyspeptic.

They rubbed against each other. The first thing I knew there was a rumpus, the old man cussed Walt —said, "Get out of the way, you—" and Walt only answered: "Damn you!" The old man had a loaded stick with him—he raised it—would have struck Walt and perhaps killed him but I came between just in time. I cried: "Get in the car, Walt!" (they were both in the street by this time) and I was glad to see the affair ended that way. No explanations were made. All effects of it vanished at once from Walt's face and manner. Walt's temper was very even, it was a rare thing for him to get angry and he must have been greatly provoked. No man ever had better control over himself. He treated everybody fairly, generously. He was n't meek, but he was no fighting-cock. He always had a few pennies for beggars along the street. I 'd get out of patience sometimes, he was so lenient. "Don't you think it 's wrong?" I 'd ask him. "No," he always said—"it 's never wrong, Peter." Would n't they drink it away? He shook his head: "No, and if they did it would n't alter the matter. For it is better to give to a dozen who do not need what is given than to give to none at all and so miss the one that should be fed." Walt was kind to animals. He admired them, but he and animals never came to close quarters. His treatment of them was always generous. I never knew him cruel to man or beast. He had a dog once—Tip—in

Camden, but he was not fond of animals for pets or especially glad to have them round him.

In Washington Walt told me he had made up his mind to celebrate the anniversary of the death of Lincoln every year. I have heard that he did it until his death. He called the thing a "religious duty." Do you remember the big black stick he carried even up to the last? I gave it to him. It delighted him. Gifts of that sort he always valued highly—the plainest, it might be, the most.

I once had the manuscript of *Drum Taps;* Walt made me a present of it. But somehow, when we moved, the manuscript disappeared—was either destroyed or stolen. Part of it was in print, but most of it was written. All his manuscript was pieced together in that fashion. At the time I did not appreciate it as I should now.

Walt's manners were always perfectly simple. We would tackle the farmers who came into town, buy a water-melon, sit down on the cellar door of Bacon's grocery, Seventh and Pennsylvania Avenue, halve it and eat it. People would go by and laugh. Walt would only smile and say, "They can have the laugh—we have the melon."

You could n't get a better idea of this simplicity than if I tell you of a visit paid him by Edmund Yates, in 1873, while he laid in the attic there in Washington, paralyzed, I being his nurse. Yates called and sent up his card. After some objections,

mostly on my part, I referred the matter to Walt, who instantly said: "Admit him — let him come in." When Yates got into the room Walt saluted him by his first name and he addressed Walt as "Mr. Whitman." No two men were ever more different. Yates elegant, dressy, cultured — Walt plain, sick in bed, his room all littered and poor. But both men were perfectly at home. Yates did not seem fazed, Walt never was. In a few minutes they were in the midst of animated talk. When Yates, after awhile, got up and said: "Good-bye," they seemed as if they had known each other many years.

Yes, Traubel, I know who it was Walt meant when he spoke to you of Grant's morning visits afoot to the old woman. Grant was then President. He would stroll from the White House alone. The woman he visited in this way was a widow, well known in Washington. Walt would laugh at me trying to get the President to ride — I would motion Grant — he would shake his head. Then later on we would see him at the widow's window, outside, leaning on the sill. Grant was very fond of the old lady — in fact, she was much liked by men generally.

Garfield and Walt were very good friends. Garfield had a large manly voice; we would be going along the Avenue together — Walt and me — and we would hear Garfield's salutation at the rear. He always signalled Walt with the cry: "After all not

to create only!" When we heard that we always knew who was coming. Garfield would catch up and they would enter into a talk; I would fall back sometimes. They spoke of books mainly but of every other earthly thing also. Often they would not get through the first run and would go up and down the Avenue several times together—I was out of it. Our tramping ground was between the Capitol and the Treasury.

Towards the end I saw very little of Walt, but he continued to write me. He never altered his manner toward me; here are a few more recent postal cards, you will see that they show the same old love. I know he wondered why I saw so little of him the three or four years before he died, but when I explained it to him he understood. Nevertheless, I am sorry for it now. The obstacles were too small to have made the difference I allowed. It was only this: In the old days I had always open doors to Walt—going, coming, staying, as I chose. Now, I had to run the gauntlet of Mrs. Davis and a nurse and what not. Somehow, I could not do it. It seemed as if things were not as they should have been. Then I had a mad impulse to go over and nurse him. I was his proper nurse—he understood me—I understood him. We loved each other deeply. But there were things preventing that, too. I saw them. I should have gone to see him, at least, in spite of everything. I know it now, I did

not know it then, but it is all right. Walt realized I never swerved from him — he knows it now — that is enough.

I have talked a long while. Let us drink up this beer together. It 's a fearful warm day. You gentlemen take the glasses, there; I will drink right from the bottle. Now, here 's to the dear old man and the dear old times — and the new times, too, and every one that 's to come! R. B.

Among the men and women the multitude,
I perceive one picking me out by secret and divine signs,
Acknowledging none else, not parent, wife, husband, brother,
child, any nearer than I am,
Some are baffled, but that one is not — that one knows me.

Ah lover and perfect equal,
I meant that you should discover me so by faint indirections,
And I when I meet you mean to discover you by the like in you.

Leaves of Grass (Ed'n 1892), p. 111

Letters

Letters of 1868

I

New York, Friday, 25 Sept., 1868. — DEAR BOY. I received your second letter yesterday — it is a real comfort to me to get such letters from you, dear friend. Every word does me good. The *Star* came all right, was quite interesting. I suppose you got my second letter last Wednesday. There is nothing new or special to write about to-day, still I thought I would send you a few lines for Sunday. I put down off hand and write all about myself and my doings, etc., because I suppose that will be really what my dear comrade wants most to hear while we are separated. I am doing a little literary work according as I feel in the mood — composing on my books. I am having a small edition of *Leaves of Grass* for 1867 fixed up and printed.* This and some

* *Drum-Taps* was published early in 1865. Then (upon Lincoln's assassination, 14 April) it was withdrawn from the market until *Sequel to Drum-Taps*, containing *When Lilacs Last in the Door-Yard Bloom'd* was ready. In 1867 an edition of *L. of G.* was published but these two sections were not included in it. Later in 1868, *Drum-Taps* and its sequel were incorporated into the *Leaves* but without change of the title page. It is this work of incorporation and the issue of a small edition of the thus reconstituted *L. of G.* which is referred to in the text.

other things give me a little occupation. Upon the whole though I don't do much but go around a great deal — eat my rations every time — sleep at night like a top — and am having good times, so far, in a quiet way, enjoying New York, the society of my mother and lots of friends. Among other things I spend a portion of the day with the pilots of the ferry boats sailing on the river. The river and bay of New York and Brooklyn are always a great attraction to me. It is a lively scene. At either flood or ebb the water is always rushing along as if in haste, and the river is often crowded with steamers, ships and small craft moving in different directions, some coming from sea, others going out. Among the pilots are some of my particular friends — when I see them up in the pilot house on my way to Brooklyn I go up and sail to and fro several trips. I enjoy an hour or two sail of this kind very much indeed. My mother and folks are well and are engaged just these times in the delightful business of moving. I should assist, but have hired a substitute in the shape of a stout young laboring man. I send you by mail a copy of the *Broadway* [Magazine] with the piece in the same as I had in the car one day. It will not interest you much only as something coming from me. I think of you very often, dearest comrade, and with more calmness than when I was there. I find it first rate to think of you, Pete, and to know that you are there all right and that I shall return and we

will be together again. I don't know what I should do if I had n't you to think of and look forward to. Tell Tom Hassett, on No. 7, that I wish to be remembered to him particular. Pete, I hope this will find you entirely well of your cold. I am glad to hear that your mother is all right of her cold. This is the time of year when they are apt to be pretty troublesome. I should like to have seen that match played between the Nationals and Olympics.

II

New York, 29 Sept., 1868. Dear Boy Pete. It is splendid here to-day and I am feeling first rate. We have had quite a dark and rainy spell, but now the prospect is good weather, clear sky, bright sun, coolish and no dust. I shall spend an hour or two on the river to-day. Your letter of the 27th, Sunday, came this morning. Also two *Stars,* 25th and 26th, the latter with Hinton's speech, the other containing an item about me. The previous *Star* arrived with your note of 23rd written just as you were going to see the Black Crook — and next morning another *Star* came. Peter, you are a good boy and shall have your reward in heaven if not on earth.

Now how about that cold? I see you went to work Saturday. You seem to be under the weather more than I thought. Dear Comrade, I hope this will find you all right and well as ever. I suppose you are working this week. Yesterday I spent most

of the day in Brooklyn helping the folks to finish up the moving business. Got through just after dark. I have not been to any amusements yet. Somehow I don't seem to care about them and I go around enough during the day. There is considerable political excitement here — banners swung across the streets almost every block, and big transparencies in front of the different headquarters. I have seen several splendid torch-light processions and out door meetings, etc., of course the great majority in New York and Brooklyn is for Seymour and Blair.* I will now bid you good-bye for this time and God bless you, dear Comrade, and keep you all right. Will write a line to No. 6. And will speak to the other boys in my next.

III

New York, Oct. 2, 1868. Dear Boy and Comrade. You say it is a pleasure to get my letters — well boy, it is a real pleasure to me to write to you. I just write, off hand, whatever comes up, and, as I said before, mostly about myself and my own doings. There have been some tremendous fires here — one in Brooklyn — eight or ten first class steam fire engines out — tell Harry on No. 11 he would see quite a change in the fire department. I have more than I can attend to here. I find myself surrounded by friends, many old ones, some new ones, some young

* Democratic candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency in fall of '68.

and attractive, and plenty of invitations and amusements. I have received an invitation from a gentleman and wife, friends of mine, at Providence, R. I., and shall go there and spend a few days latter part of October. How about the cold? I hope it is well. Dear Pete, with all my kind friends here and invitations, etc., though I love them all and gratefully reciprocate their kindness, I finally turn to you and think of you there. Well, I guess I have written enough for this time. Dear Pete, I will now bid you good-bye for the present. Take care of yourself and God bless you, my loving comrade. I will write again soon.

IV

Oct. 6, 1868. Dear Pete. There is nothing special with me to write to you about. The time slips away mighty quick. It seems but a day or two since I left Washington yet am now on the fourth week of my furlough. Last night was about the greatest political show I ever saw even in New York — a grand Democratic meeting and torch light processions. I was out in the midst of them, to see the sights. I always enjoy seeing the City let loose and on the rampage as it was last night to the fullest extent. I cannot begin to tell you how the Democrats showed themselves by thousands and tens of thousands. The whole City was lit up with torches. Cannons were fired all night in

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various parts of the City. As I was on my way home in a 2nd Avenue car between 12 and 1 o'clock we got blocked in by a great part of the returning procession. Of course we had to just stand and take it. I enjoyed it hugely from the front platform. They were nearly an hour passing us, streaming both sides. In the procession were all sorts of objects, models of ships forty or fifty feet long, full manned, cars of liberty with women, etc., etc. The ranks spread across the street, and everybody carried a blazing torch. Fireworks were going off in every direction. The sky was full of big balloons letting off rockets and Roman candles 'way up among the stars. The excitement, the rush, and the endless torches gave me great pleasure. Ever and anon the cannon, some near some distant. I heard them long after I got to bed. It sounded like a distant engagement. I send you the *Herald* with a sort of account of the show, but it does n't do half justice to it.—The speeches were of no account at all.

I suppose you got a letter and paper from me Saturday, Oct. 3rd. I received your welcome letter of Oct. 1st, also the *Star*. I read Mr. Noyes' Western letters with pleasure. So you have something new in R. R.—new offices and rules. The R. R. [street railroad] business here is very different. They go through these long routes on the rush—no mercy to the cattle. The 3rd Avenue R. R. lost 36 horses in one day last summer, one of those hot

days. We are having pleasant weather just now, seems like Indian summer. So long, dear Pete. From your loving comrade, WALT.

V

New York, Oct. 9, 1868. DEAR PETE. It is splendid here this forenoon — bright and cool. I was out early taking a short walk by the river only two squares from where I live. I received your letter last Monday, also the *Star* same date, and glad enough to hear from you and the oftener the better, every word is good (I am grateful to these young men on the R. R. for their love and remembrance to me — Dave and Jim and Charley Sorrell, Tom Hassett, Harry on No. 11). I sent you a letter on the 6th which I suppose you received next day. Tell Henry Hurt I received his letter of Oct. 5th all right, and that it was welcome. Political meetings here every night. The coming Pennsylvania and Ohio elections cause much talk and excitement. The fall is upon us; overcoats are in demand. I already begin to think about my return to Washington. A month has nearly passed away. I have received an invitation from a gentleman and his wife, friends of mine, at Providence, R. I., and shall probably go down there and spend a few days latter part of October. Shall I tell you about it or part of it just to fill up? I generally spend the forenoon in my

room writing, etc., then take a bath, fix up and go out about 12 and loafe somewhere or call on someone down town or on business, or perhaps if it is very pleasant and I feel like it ride a trip with some driver friend on Broadway from 23rd Street to Bowling Green, three miles each way. (Every day I find I have plenty to do, every hour is occupied with something.) You know it is a never ending amusement and study and recreation for me to ride a couple of hours of a pleasant afternoon on a Broadway stage in this way. You see everything as you pass, a sort of living, endless panorama — shops and splendid buildings and great windows: and on the broad sidewalks crowds of women richly dressed continually passing altogether different, superior in style and looks from any to be seen anywhere else — in fact a perfect stream of people — men too dressed in high style, and plenty of foreigners — and then in the streets the thick crowd of carriages, stages, carts, hotel and private coaches, and in fact all sorts of vehicles and many first class teams, mile after mile, and the splendor of such a great street and so many tall, ornamental, noble buildings many of them of white marble, and the gayety and motion on every side: you will not wonder how much attraction all this is on a fine day, to a great loafer like me, who enjoys so much seeing the busy world move by him, and exhibiting itself for his amusement, while he takes it easy and just looks on and

observes. Then about the Broadway drivers, nearly all of them are my personal friends. Some have been attached to me for years and I to them. But I believe I have already mentioned them in a former letter. Yesterday I rode the trip I describe, with a friend on a 5th Avenue stage — No. 26, a sort [of] namesake of yours, Pete Calhoun, I have known him 9 or 10 years. The day was fine and I enjoyed the trip muchly. So I try to put in something in my letters to give you an idea of how I pass part of my time and what I see here in New York. Of course I have quite a variety. Some four or five hours every day I most always spend in study, writing, etc. The other serves for a good change. I am writing two or three pieces. I am having finished about 225 copies of *Leaves of Grass* bound up, to supply orders. Those copies form all that is left of the old edition. Then there will be no more in the market till I have my new and improved edition set up and stereotyped, which it is my present plan to do the ensuing winter at my leisure in Washington. Mother is well, I take either dinner or supper with her every day. Remember me to David Stevens and John Towers. Tell Harry on No. 11 I will go to the hall again and see if I can find that man in the Sheriff's office. I send you my love and *so long* for the present. Yours for life, dear Pete (and death the same).

VI

New York, Oct. 14, '68. Dear Boy Pete. There is great excitement here over the returns of yesterday's elections, as I suppose there is the same in Washington also. The Democrats look blue enough and the Republicans are on their high horses. I suppose Grant's success is now certain. As I write the bands are out here parading the streets and the drums beating. It is now forenoon. To-night we will hear the big guns and see the blazing bonfires. It is dark and cloudy weather here to-day. I was glad to get your letter of Friday 9th which is the last—also a *Star* at the same time. I suppose you received mine of the 9th and the papers—the *Star* and *Express*. I am about as well as usual. Mother is well and my brothers the same. I am going to-morrow to Providence, R. I., to spend a few days. Should you write any time within four or five days after receiving this direct to me *Care of Hon. Thomas Davis, Providence, R. I.*

My friend O'Connor is quite unwell and is absent from Washington away down on the New England Coast. I received a long letter from him yesterday. I believe I told you I was finishing up about 230 copies of my book, expecting to sell them. I have had them finished up and bound, etc., but there is a hitch about the sale and I shall not be able to sell them at present. There is a pretty strong enmity here toward me and *L. of G.* among certain classes

— not only that it is a great mess of crazy talk and hard words all tangled up, without sense or meaning (which, by the by, is, I believe, your judgment about it) — but others sincerely think that it is a bad book, improper, and ought to be denounced and put down, and its author along with it. There are some venomous but laughable squibs occasionally in the papers. One said that I had received 25 guineas for a piece in an English Magazine, but that it was worth all that for any one to read it. Another, the *World* said: "Walt Whitman was in town yesterday carrying the blue cotton umbrella of the future" (it had been a drizzly forenoon) — so they go it. When they get off a good squib however I laugh at it just as much as any one. Dear Pete, I hope this will find you well and in good spirits. Remember me to Coley, John Towers, Jim Sorrell, David Stevens and all the boys — WALT.

I have been debating whether to get my leave extended and stay till election day to vote or whether to pair off with a Democrat and return (which will amount to the same thing). Most likely I shall decide on the latter, but don't know for certain. Dear boy, I send you my love — I will write you a line from Providence — so long — Pete.

VII

Providence, R. I., Oct. 17, 1868. DEAR PETE. According to announcement in my last I have made a

movement and change of base from tumultuous, close-packed, world-like New York, to this half-rural, brisk, handsome, New England, third-class town. I came on here last Thursday. I came as guest of Thomas Davis, formerly M.C. from this City—arrived between 8 and 9 o'clock at night — found his carriage at the depot waiting for me. At the house — a sort of castle built of stone, on fine grounds, a mile and a half from the town — a hearty welcome from his hospitable wife and a family of young ladies and children — a hot supper — a tip-top room, etc., etc., — so you see, Pete, your old man is in clover. I have since been round the City and suburbs considerably. I am going down to Newport before I return — Invitations, etc., are numerous — I am, in fact, already dividing myself between two hospitalities, part of the time with Mr. and Mrs. Davis and part with Dr. and Mrs. Channing, old acquaintances of mine in another part of the City. I stopt last night at the house of the latter. It is on a high and pleasant hill at the side of the City which it entirely overlooks. From the window of my room I can look down across the city, the river, and off miles upon miles in the distance. The woods are a real spectacle, colored with all the rich colors of autumn. Yesterday it was beautiful and balmy beyond description, like the finest Indian summer. I wandered around, partly walking, partly in a carriage, a good part of the day. To-day there is an entire change of

scene. As I am writing this, what do you think, Pete? great flakes of snow are falling — quite a thick flurry —sometimes the wind blows in gusts—in fact a real snow storm has been going on all the forenoon, though without the look or feeling of winter as the grass and foliage are autumnal and the cold is not severe yet. Still it [is] disagreeable and wet and dark and prevents me from going out. So I will make up by writing a couple of letters, one to mother and one to you, telling you about things. Providence is a handsome city of about 70,000 inhabitants, has numerous manufactories in full operation — everything looks lively. From the house up here I can hear almost any time, night or day, the sound of factory bells and the steam whistles of locomotives half a mile distant. Then the lights at night seen from here make a curious exhibition. At both places I stop we have plenty of ripe fresh fruit and lots of flowers. Pete, I could now send you a bouquet every morning far better than I used to — of much choicer flowers. And how are you getting along, dearest comrade? I hope you are well and that everything is going on right with you. I have not heard from you for a good while, it seems. I suppose you got my last letter of 14th, from N. Y. I expect to return to N. Y. about the 22nd. Should you feel to write after receiving this you might direct to 331 East 55th Street as before. I am well as usual. I am luxuriating on excellent grapes. I wish

I could send you a basket. At both places I stop they have vineyards and the grapes are very good and plenty this year. Last night when I went up at 11 o'clock to my room I took up three great bunches each as big as my fist and sat down and eat them before I turned in. I like to eat them in this way and it agrees with me. It is quite a change here from my associations and surroundings either in Washington or New York. Evenings and meal times I find myself thrown amidst a mild, pleasant society, really intellectual, composed largely of educated women, some young, some not so young, everything refined and polite, *not* disposed to small talk, conversing in earnest on profound subjects, but with a moderate rather slow tone and in a kind of conciliatory manner —delighting in this sort of conversation and spending their evenings till late, in it. I take a hand in, for a change. I find it entertaining, as I say, for novelty's sake, for a week or two — but I know very well that would be enough for me. It is all first-rate, good and smart but too constrained and bookish for a free old hawk like me. I send you my love, dear Pete. *So long.* Will write from N. Y. soon as I return there.

P. S. Just after 12 o'clock noon. As I am just finishing the storm lightens up — I am sure I see a bit of blue sky in the clouds — yes, the sun is certainly breaking out.

VIII

Providence, R. I., Oct. 18, '68. DEAR BOY AND COMRADE, I sent off a letter to you yesterday noon, but towards evening Mr. Davis brought me up from the P. O. yours of 15th, which I was so glad to get that you shall have an answer right off. After the flurry of snow I told you of yesterday morning we had a pleasant clear afternoon. I took a long walk, partly through the woods, and enjoyed it much. The weather, pretty cold and sharp and remains so yet. As I left my overcoat in Washington I have been compelled to get something here, so I have bought me a great iron grey shawl which I find very acceptable. I always had doubts about a shawl, but have already got used to mine and like it first rate. In the evening I went by invitation to a party of ladies and gentlemen — mostly ladies. We had a warm, animated talk, among other things about spiritualism. I talked too, indeed went in like a house afire. It was good exercise — for the fun of the thing. I also made love to the women, and flatter myself that I created at least one impression — wretch and gay deceiver that I am. The truth is Peter, that I am here at the present time mainly in the midst of female women, some of them young and jolly, and meet them most every evening in company, and the way in which this aged party comes up to the scratch and cuts out the youthful parties and fills their hearts with envy is absolutely

a caution. You would be astonished, my son, to see the brass and coolness and the capacity of flirtation and carrying on with the girls — I would never have believed it of myself. Brought here by destiny, surrounded in this way and, as I in self defense would modestly state, sought for, seized upon and ravenously devoured by these creatures — and so nice and smart some of them are, and handsome too — there is nothing left for me, is there, but to go in. Of course, young man, you understand it is all on the square. My going in amounts to just talking and joking and having a devil of a jolly time carrying on — that 's all. They are all as good girls as ever lived. I have already had three or four such parties here — which you will certainly admit, considering my age and heft, to say nothing of my reputation, is doing pretty well. Then away late — lost my way — wandered over the City and got home after one o'clock.

I go about quite a good deal. This is as handsome a City as I ever saw, some of the streets run up steep hills. Except in a few of the business streets, where the buildings are compact — in nine-tenths of the City — every house stands separate and has a little or quite a deal of ground about it for flowers and for shade or fruit trees or a garden. I never saw such a prosperous looking City — but of course no grand public buildings like Washington.

This forenoon I have been out away down along

the banks of the river and cove and making explorations generally. All is new to me and I returned quite tired. I have eat a hearty dinner. Then I thought I would come up and sit awhile in my room. But as I did not feel like reading I concluded to write this precious screed. Fortunate young man, to keep getting such instructive letters — aint you? It is now four o'clock and bright and cool and I have staid in long enough. I will sally forth on a walk and drop this in the P. O. before supper. So long, dear Pete, and my love to you as always, always. WALT.

IX

New York—Oct. 22nd (?) 1868. DEAR PETE— Well, here I am back again in New York. Have had a pleasant trip down East — went down the bay there after I wrote you last and also a visit around among the factories of Rhode Island. Some of them are very large — regular little towns. The Spragues, two brothers, employ 7000 workmen in their factories alone. Some of the owners are men of immense wealth. I write this early in the forenoon sitting in my room in 55th Street after breakfast. As to getting my leave extended so that I might stay to vote, I have settled (as I spoke of in a former letter) to pair off with a friend of mine here who was going to vote for Seymour and return on time. The weather is cool and clear to-day. I shall probably not make

out much of a letter to you this time, Pete, as I feel rather stupid yet this morning. I guess I slept too hard or perhaps, as they say, I got up wrong end foremost. But I thought I would write one more letter for the last. I hope you have enjoyed reading them as much as I have writing them — for that I *have* enjoyed. You too have done first rate and have sent me as many as I have you, and good letters too. I am now going out down town and across to Brooklyn to spend a few hours with my mother. I don't know whether I told you that my sister with her two young children from St. Louis arrived the night before I left New York, and will stop with mother this fall and winter — her health * is not very good. I shall return 26th — Take care of yourself, Dear Pete, we will soon be together again —WALT.

* *I. e.*, the health of the "sister" (Jeff's wife Mattie)—she died of consumption 19th Feb., 1873.

I WILL plant companionship thick as trees along all the rivers of America, and along the shores of the great lakes, and all over the prairies,

I will make inseparable cities with their arms about each other's necks,

By the love of comrades,

By the manly love of comrades.

Leaves of Grass (Ed'n 1892), p. 99.

Letters of 1869

I

Brooklyn, N. Y., Saturday evening, Aug. 21 [1869]. DEAR PETE. I have been very sick the last three days — I don't know what to call it — it makes me prostrated and deadly weak, and little use of my limbs. I have thought of you, my darling boy, very much of the time. I have not been out of the house since the first day after my arrival. I had a pleasant journey through on the cars Wednesday afternoon and night — felt quite well then. My mother and folks are all well. We are in our new house — we occupy part and rent out part. I have a nice room, where I now sit writing this. It is the latter part of the afternoon. I feel better the last hour or so. It has been extremely hot here the last two days — I see it has been so in Washington too. I hope I shall get out soon — I hanker to get out doors, and down the bay. And now dear Pete for yourself. How is it with you, dearest boy — and is there anything different with the face? * Dear Pete, you must forgive me for being so cold the last day and

* At this time Doyle was suffering from an eruption on his face of which he did not know the cause. Whitman took him to Dr. Charles Bowen, one of the army

evening. I was unspeakably shocked and repelled from you by that talk and proposition of yours — you know what — there by the fountain. It seemed indeed to me (for I will talk out plain to you, dearest comrade) that the one I loved, and who had always been so manly and sensible, was gone, and a fool and intentional suicide stood in his place. I spoke so sternly and cutting. (Though I see now that my words might have appeared to have a certain other meaning, which I did n't dream of — insulting to you, never for one moment in my thoughts.) But will say no more of this — for I know such thoughts must have come when you was not yourself but in a moment of derangement, —and have passed away like a bad dream. Dearest boy I have not a doubt but you will get well and entirely well — and we will one day look back on these drawbacks and sufferings as things long past. The extreme cases of that malady, (as I told you before,) are persons that have very deeply diseased blood so they have no foundation to build on — you are of healthy stock, with a sound constitution and good blood — and I know it is impossible for it to

doctors, who pronounced it a case of " barber's itch " (tinea sycosis), an exceedingly obstinate skin disease, which he said could best be eradicated by lancing and cauterizing with nitrate of silver. At Doyle's solicitation Dr. Bowen undertook the treatment at once, but for a time no improvement was apparent. In a moment of despondency Doyle declared that life burdened with such an affliction was not worth living. Whitman took his thoughtless speech too literally as appears from the letter, and it is in perfect keeping with his imperturbable faith and complete acceptance of life that he should have been shocked, as he was, by even a suggestion of suicide.

continue long. My darling, if you are not well when I come back I will get a good room or two in some quiet place, and we will live together and devote ourselves altogether to the job of curing you, and making you stronger and healthier than ever. I have had this in my mind before but never broached it to you. I could go on with my work in the Attorney General's office just the same — and we would see that your mother should have a small sum every week to keep the pot a-boiling at home. Dear comrade, I think of you very often. My love for you is indestructible, and since that night and morning has returned more than before. Dear Pete, dear son, my darling boy, my young and loving brother, don't let the devil put such thoughts in your mind again — wickedness unspeakable — death and disgrace here, and hell's agonies hereafter — Then what would it be afterward to the mother? What to *me?* — Pete, I send you some money by Adams' Express — you use it, dearest son, and when it is gone you shall have some more, for I have plenty. I will write again before long — give my love to Johnny Lee, my dear darling boy. I love him truly — (let him read these three last lines) — Dear Pete, *remember* — WALT.

II

Brooklyn, September 3, 1869. DEAR PETE. I thought I would write you a letter to-day, as you would be anxious to hear. I received your letter

of August 24th, and it was a great comfort to me. I have read it several times since. Dear Pete, I hope everything is going on favorably with you. I think about you every day and every night. I do hope you are in good spirits and health. I want to hear about the face. I suppose you are working on the road. There is nothing new or special in my affairs or doings. The weather is pleasant here — it is pretty cool and dry. My folks all continue well — mother first rate, and brothers ditto. I do not have such good luck, I have felt unwell most every day — some days not so bad. Besides I have those spells again, worse, last longer, sick enough, come sudden, dizzy and sudden sweat — It is hard to tell exactly what is the matter or what to do. The doctor says it is all from that hospital malaria, hospital poison absorbed in the system years ago — he thinks it better for me in Washington than here. About one third of the time I feel pretty well. I have taken three or four of my favorite rides on Broadway, I believe I described them to you in my letters a year ago. I find many of my old friends, and new ones too, and am received with the same warm friendship and love as ever. Broadway is more crowded and gay than ever, and the women look finer, and the shops richer — then there are many new and splendid buildings of marble or iron — they seem to almost reach the clouds, they are so tall — some of them cost millions of dollars.

Staging in N. Y. has been very poor this summer — $9 or $10 even on the big Broadway lines — Railroading has also been slim. New York is all cut up with railroads — Brooklyn also — I have seen Jimmy Foy — he was over to Brooklyn looking for work on a road. He was well and hearty, and wished to be remembered to you. They pay $2½ on many of the roads here and 2¼ on the rest. The work is pretty hard, but the hours not so long as in Washington. There is all kinds of fun and sport here, by day and night — and lots of theatres and amusements in full blast. I have not been to any of them — have not been to see any of my particular women friends — though sent for (the papers here have noticed my arrival) — have not been down to the sea-shore as I intended. In fact my jaunt this time has been a failure — Better luck next time — Now Pete, dear loving boy, I don't want you to worry about me — I shall come along all right. — As it is, I have a good square appetite most of the time yet, good nights' sleep — and look about the same as usual (which is of course lovely and fascinating beyond description). Tell Johnny Lee I send him my love, and hope he is well and hearty. I think of him daily. I sent him a letter some time ago, which I suppose he received about August 26th, and showed you — but I have not had a word from him. Send him this letter to read, as he will wish to hear about me. God bless you, dear Pete —

Walt Whitman and Peter Doyle, 1869
From a drawing by H. D. Young from a photograph by Rice, Washington

dear loving comrade, and farewell till next time, my darling boy. WALT.

III

Brooklyn, Friday afternoon, Sept. 10, 1869. DEAR PETE — dear son. I have received your letter of the 8th to-day — all your letters have come safe — four altogether. This is the third I have sent you (besides that one by Adams' Express, Aug. 23rd). Pete, you say my sickness must be worse than I described in my letters — and ask me to write precisely how I am. No, dearest boy, I wrote just as it really was. But Pete, you will now be truly happy to learn that I am feeling all right, and have been mainly so for the last four days,— and have had no bad spells all that time. Yesterday I thought I felt as strong and well as ever in my life — in fact real young and jolly. I loafed around New York most all day — had a first rate good time. All along Broadway hundreds of rich flags and streamers at half-mast for Gen. Rawlins'* funeral. From the tall buildings they waved out in a stiff west wind all across Broadway — late in the afternoon I rode up from the Battery to look at them,— as the sun struck through them — I thought I had never seen anything so curious and beautiful. On all the shipping, ferry boats, public buildings, etc., flags at half-mast

* John Aaron Rawlins, b. at East Galena, Ill., 13 Feb., '31, d. at Washington, D. C., 9 Dec., '69. A General in the Northern army. Was a Douglas Democrat in '60, but joined the Union Army on the outbreak of the Civil War and became Assistant Adjutant General to Grant in 1861 and Chief of Staff with the rank of Brigadier General in 1865. Was Secretary of War 1869.

too. This is the style here. No black drapery for mourning — only thousands of flags at half-mast, on the water as well as land — for any big bug's funeral. To-day I am all right too. It is now towards 3 — — mother and I have just had our dinner, (my mammy's own cooking mostly,) I have been out all the forenoon knocking around — the water is my favorite recreation — I could spend two or three hours every day of my life here, and never get tired — some of the pilots are dear personal friends of mine — some, when we meet we kiss each other (I am an exception to all their customs with others) — some of their boys have grown up since I have known them, and they too know me and are very friendly.—Pete, the fourth week of my vacation is most ended. I shall return the middle of next week. Give my love to Johnny Lee — let him read this letter and then return it to you. Dear Jack, I received your affectionate letter of Sept. 5th. Pete, I have seen Tom Haslett — he is well — he is working extra on Broadway and 42nd St. R. R. He does not think of going home till Christmas. Jimmy Foy has not got work yet. I suppose you got *Kenilworth* I sent. Well, boy, I shall now take a bath, dress myself and go out, cross the river, put this letter in the P. O. and then ramble and ride around the City awhile, as I think we are going to have a fine evening and moonlight, etc. Good-bye, dear son — we will soon be together again. WALT.

WHAT think you I take my pen in hand to record?
The battleship, perfect model'd, majestic that I saw pass the offing today under full sail?
The splendors of the past day? or the splendor of the night that envelops me?
Or the vaunted glory and growth of the great city spread around me? — no;
But merely of two simple men I saw today on the pier in the midst of the crowd, parting the parting of dear friends,
The one to remain hung on the other's neck and passionately kissed him,
While the one to depart tightly prest the one to remain in his arms.

Leaves of Grass (Ed'n 1892), p. 110.

Letters of 1870

I

Brooklyn, Saturday afternoon, July 30 [1870]. DEAR PETE. Well here I am home again with my mother, writing to you from Brooklyn once more. We parted there, you know, at the corner of 7th St. Tuesday night. Pete there was something in that hour from 10 to 11 o'clock (parting though it was) that has left me pleasure and comfort for good — I never dreamed that you made so much of having me with you, nor that you could feel so downcast at losing me. I foolishly thought it was all on the other side. But all I will say further on the subject is, I now see clearly, that was all wrong. I started from the depot in the 7.25 train the next morning — it was pretty warm, yet I had a very pleasant journey, and we got in New York by 5 o'clock afternoon. About half an hour before we arrived, I noticed a very agreeable change in the weather — the heat had moderated — and in fact it has been pleasant enough every day since. I found mother and all as well as usual. It is now Saturday between 4 and 5 in the afternoon — I will write

more on the other side — but Pete, I must now hang up for the present as there is a young lady down stairs whom I have to go with to the ferry and across to the cars. *Sunday, 6 p.m.* Pete, dear boy, I will write you a line to-day before I go. I am going over to New York to visit the lady I went down to the ferry with — so you see I am quite a lady's man again in my old days — There is nothing special to write about — I am feeling in first-rate spirits and eat my rations every time. *Monday, Aug. 1.* The carrier brought quite a bunch this forenoon for the Whitman family, but no letter from you. I keep real busy with one thing and another, the whole day is occupied — I am feeling quite well all the time and go out a great deal, knocking around one place and another. The evenings here are delightful and I am always out in them, sometimes on the river sometimes in New York — There is a cool breeze and the moon shining. I think every time of you and wish if we could only be together these evenings at any rate. *Tuesday, Aug. 2.* Well Pete, you will have quite a diary at this rate. Your letter came this morning — and I was glad enough to get word from you. I have been over to New York to-day on business — it is a pleasure even to cross the ferry — the river is splendid to-day — a stiff breeze blowing and the smell of the salt sea blowing up — (sweeter than any perfume to my nose) — It is now 2 o'clock, I

have had my dinner and am sitting here alone writing this — Love to you, dear Pete — and I won't be so long again writing to my darling boy. WALT.

II

Brooklyn, Wednesday night, Aug. 3 [1870]. DEAR PETE. Dear son, I received your second letter to-day — also the *Star*. I sent you a letter Tuesday evening, which I suppose you have received. As I am now sitting in my room and have no desire to go to bed yet, I will commence another. Give my best respects to George Smith — also to Pensey Bell and his brother George — also to Mr. Shedd — and in fact to all my railroad friends whenever they enquire after me — Dear son, I can almost see you drowsing and nodding since last Sunday, going home late — especially as we wait there at 7th St. and I am telling you something deep about the heavenly bodies — and in the midst of it I look around and find you fast asleep, and your head on my shoulder like a chunk of wood — an awful compliment to my lecturing powers. All the talk here now is either the war on the Rhine, or the murder of old Mr. Nathan, or some other murder — for there are plenty of them — I send you a couple of papers with pieces about them. Say whether they come safe. I believe that is all for to-night, as it is getting late. Good night, Pete — Good night, my darling son — here is a kiss for you, dear boy — on

the paper here — a good long one. *Thursday — 4th* — I have been out all the forenoon and until about 2 o'clock — had some business in New York, which I attended, then came back and spent an hour and a half on the river, with one of the pilots, a particular friend of mine — saw the yachts, several of them, including the *America,* out practising for the great race that comes off Monday — the *Dauntless* was out yesterday — and the *Cambria* went down three days ago — the *America* is the handsomest little craft I ever laid eyes on — I also saw Henry Ward Beecher and had some talk with him — I find myself going with the pilots muchly — there are several that were little boys, now grown up, and remember me well — fine hearty fellows — always around the water — sons of old pilots — they make much of me, and of course I am willing. 10 *o'clock at night* — As this is lying here on my table to be sent off to-morrow, I will imagine you with your arm around my neck saying Good night, Walt—and me — Good night, Pete. — *Friday morning, Aug 5.* — All well — fine weather and I feel in good spirits. I am just going out and across to New York. We had a heavy shower here yesterday afternoon 4th, the weather is not too hot here. WALT.

III

Brooklyn, August 7 [1870]. DEAR BOY PETE. It is a beautiful quiet Sunday forenoon. I am feeling

first rate and have had quite a good day so far. After breakfast I went out and sat a long while on the porch in front, reading the Sunday paper, enjoying the cool and shade,—and besides some real sweet music—A young widow next door, a friend of mother's, has been in her parlor the last three hours, singing and practising—she has a voice not powerful and ornamental as the opera ladies, but with that something, pleasing and tender, that goes to the right spot—sings good old hymns and songs—I have enjoyed it greatly—you would too—it is now between ½ past 10 and 11—The distant bells are slowly ringing—otherwise it is pretty quiet—The last two hours I have been up here reading my proof. I have four or five hours of this every day, which gives me something to do—an employment like—Pete, I have just taken out your last letter and read it over again—I went out on a kind of little excursion by myself last night—all alone—It was very pleasant, cool enough and the moon shining—I think of you too, Pete, and a great deal of the time. *Tuesday afternoon, 9th,* I was out yesterday a great part of the day on the river to see the yacht race—over a thousand spectator boats, big, little, and middle sized—many of them all drest with flags, bright colored streamers, etc., streaming over the green waters, beneath the sunshine and bright blue sky—a grand sight—and the beautiful yachts and pleasure boats, lots and lots of them, with immense white

sails, like great wings, tearing along in the breeze — the bay each side alive with people on the boats — 150,000 people they say — the shores and hills covered for miles too — I was out again last night. It was fine.—Your welcome letter of the 8th has come this morning, dear loving son, and has pleased me, as always. That accident on the bridge was indeed terrible — that bridge is a disgrace to Washington, anyhow— Pete, I wish you to tell Mr. and Mrs. Nash and your cousin, and all, I send them my best respects — Also Henry Hurt, also Andy Woolbridge on 7th St. *Wednesday afternoon, 10th.* Dear son. Yours of 9th, came this forenoon — I feel quite unhappy about your bad luck again — reported by some damned fool, and taken off by a worse damned fool — But you keep a good heart, Pete — school will keep somehow — I have no room to write more at present — Dear loving son, I want to keep writing frequently. WALT. Just going out — But just in the nick of time before I sealed this letter as I had finished dressing to go out, Mother sung out to me from the foot of the stairs — and I got your good welcome third letter. Pete, you are doing first rate. I guess Pleasants was after something stronger than Kissengen — Tell Dr. Milburn I don't find any place in N. Y. or Brooklyn to compare with his for the mineral drinks — But I am living more to suit me in the grub line, this weather — not so much meat — mother's cookery, and quite a good deal of fruit, etc.—A lovely

broiled steak and perfect coffee this morning — I wish you had been on hand, young man.

IV

Brooklyn, August 12 [1870]. Dear Son. Yours of yesterday 11th, has just this minute come, and I wish to write a few lines so that you may get them before Sunday. I have not time to write much, as it is now about 5 P.M. Dear son, I hope you will not feel discouraged at the situation, even if it comes to the worst. It is now thought that business generally throughout the country is ready to revive as soon as the hot season is done, and that everything will be brisker this fall than any time since the war. Dear Pete, whatever happens, in such ups and downs, you must try to meet it with a stout heart. As long as the Almighty vouchsafes you health, strength, and a clear conscience, let other things do their worst, — and let Riker go to hell. You are better off to-day to be what you are, than to be him with his $10,000 a year—poor thin-livered cuss that he is.—My darling son, I will send you $5 every Saturday, should you be idle — as I can easily spare that, and you can depend upon it — it won't go far, but it may take the edge off. Many, many loving kisses to you, dear son — for I must close, or I shall lose to-night's mail. Walt.

V

Brooklyn, August 22, 1870. DEAR PETE. I have not heard from you now for nine days. Your letter of 13th, (last Saturday week,) in which you said the orders were for you to go to work next day, was the last I have received. I took it for granted that you went to work, and have been at it since — and I hope all is right with you — but why have you not written? — Dear son, if not to work I wish to send you a little money. Everything goes well with me — that is, everything goes as well as can be expected — I am feeling first rate — I am down the bay often, and sometimes spend nearly all day on the sea-shore a few miles down. I am all sunburnt and red, and weigh several pounds more than when I left Washington. A friend who has n't seen me for a good while said this morning — "Why Walt, you are fatter and saucier than ever" — but I will close by sending my love to my darling son — and to him I shall always be the same old WALT.

VI

Brooklyn, August 25 [1870]. DEAR SON. I will begin a letter for you to-day, and probably finish it to-morrow, and send it off, so that you will have it by or before Sunday. The heat is again upon us here, days — but the nights are pleasant. It is now Thursday afternoon, between 3 and 4 — and I am writing this in my room on Portland Ave. Pete,

one month of my leave exactly is up to-day. I have been out quite a while to-day over to New York, to the printing office, and seeing to one thing and another. It was sweaty work. On my way back I went up in the pilot house and sailed across the river three times—a fine breeze blowing. Then home—took a bath—ate my dinner—and here I am all alone most stript, taking things as cool as possible, and writing this letter. Pete, your letter of 23rd came yesterday, and the one written partly that night and partly 24th came this forenoon. Those are the only letters I have received since the one of 13th telling me the orders were for you to go to work next day (Sunday). I have been uneasy ever since to hear. The letter received this morning gives me the first definite information how things have turned out. Dear son, I want you to try to cast aside all irritating thoughts and recollections, and preserve a cheerful mind. That is the main part of getting along through the toil and battle of life—and it is a good deal habit. I was away a good part of last week down the bay—went away each time early in the morning, and got home after dark. I am having quite jovial times. I went to Wallack's theatre one night lately with a friend who wanted to see a piece called *Fritz*—a miserable sickish piece. I was glad enough to get out in the open air away from such humbug. I am still feeling gay and hearty. I work several hours a

day keeping things straight among the printers and founders on my books. They are being cast in electrotype plates.* I will tell you more about it when we meet. Well Pete, I guess this will do for to-day. I think of sallying forth soon as the sun gets pretty well down, and crossing to New York to loafe around two or three hours. *Friday afternoon, August 26.* Well I went over to New York last evening — up town to see some friends — come home about 11 — just in time to escape a thunder shower. It is splendid to-day — I have been over all day working, quite busy — and have just got home, and had my dinner — it is now about 4. It is quite pleasant riding here in Brooklyn — we have large open cars, in good weather it is real lively — I quite enjoy it — Pete, give my respects to Mr. and Mrs. Nash, and to your cousin — also to Jenny Murphy — not forgetting the boys on the road — also Wash Milburn — God bless you — and good-bye for this time, my own dear loving boy. WALT.

VII

Brooklyn, September 2, 1870. DEAR PETE. I received your welcome letter of Aug. 27th and also 31st, enclosing Ned Stewart's — when you write tell Ned I am here in Brooklyn, loafing around — and that I send my love. Pete, there is nothing particular to write about this time — pretty much

* These plates were used for the 1871–'72 and '76 eds. of *Leaves of Grass.*

the same story — every day out on the bay awhile, or going down to Coney Island beach — and every day from two to four or five hours in the printing office — I still keep well and hearty, and the weather is fine — warm through the middle of the day, and cool morning and nights — I fall in with a good many of my acquaintances of years ago — the young fellows (now not so young) — that I knew intimately here before the war — some are dead — and some have got married — and some have grown rich — one of the latter I was up with yesterday and last night — he has a big house on Fifth Avenue I was there to — dinner (dinner at 8 P.M. !) — everything in the loudest sort of style, with wines, silver, nigger waiters, etc. etc. etc. But my friend is just one of the manliest, jovialest, best sort of fellows — no airs, and just the one to suit you and me,— no women in the house — he is single — he wants me to make my home there — I shall not do that, but shall go there very frequently — the dinners and good wines are attractive — then there is a fine library. Well Pete, I am on the second month of my furlough — to think it is almost six weeks since we parted there that night — my dear loving boy, how much I want to see you — it seems a long while. I have received a good letter from Mr. O'Connor, and also one from John Rowland who is in the office for me. Nothing new in office — Well, Pete, about half of our separation is over — the next six weeks will soon pass

away — indeed it may be only four, as John Rowland told me he might wish to go away — Good-bye for the present, my loving son, and give my respects to any of the boys that ask about me.

WALT.

VIII

Brooklyn, September 6th, 1870. DEAR SON. I see by your letter of the 4th, that you are working as usual. I sometimes fancy I see you — and 14* — and Mr. Shedd going up or down the avenue — or at the end at Georgetown — or Navy Yard — the old familiar route and scenes — the circle, the President's House — Willards' — 7th Street — Capitol Gate — the Hill, etc. etc. etc. I keep pretty busy, writing, proof-reading, etc. I am at the printing office several hours every day — I feel in capital health and spirits — weigh several pound heavier — but, as a small drawback, and something new for me, find myself needing glasses every time I read or write† — this has grown upon me very rapidly since and during the hot weather, and especially since I left Washington — so I read and write as little as possible, beyond my printing matters, etc. — as that occupies several hours and tires my eyes sometimes. We are having splendid fall weather, both days and

* "14" was the number of the street car of which Pete was conductor at this time and is used as a name for the car by Whitman. Mr. Shedd was the driver on "14."

† He was in his fifty-second year. The average age to begin wearing glasses is about forty-five.

nights. Last night I was out late — the scene on the river was heavenly — the sky clear, and the moon shining her brightest — I felt almost chilly at last with the cold — and so put for home. One of the prettiest sights now is to see the great German steamers, and other ships, as they lay tied up along shore, all covered with gay flags and streamers — "dress ship" as they call it — flaunting out in the breeze, under a brilliant sky and sun — all in honor, of course, of the victory of the German Armies — all the spars and rigging are hid with hundreds and hundreds of flags — a big red, white and black flag capping all. Of course you may know that the way the war turns out suits me to death — Louis Napoleon fully deserves his fate — I consider him by far the meanest scoundrel (with all his smartness) that ever sat on a throne. I make a distinction, however, I admire and love the French, and France as a nation — of all foreign nations, she has my sympathy first of all. Pete, I was just reading over your last letter again. Dear son, you must try to keep up a good heart. You say you do — but I am afraid you are feeling (or have felt) somewhat unhappy. One soon falls into the habit of getting low spirited or deprest and moody — if a man allows himself, he will always find plenty to make him so — Everyone [has] his trouble, disappointments, rebuffs, etc. especially every young and proud-spirited man who has to work for his living. But I want you to try

and put a brave face against everything that happens — for it is not so much the little misfortunes of life themselves, as the way we take them and brood over them, that causes the trouble. About the "tiresome" all I have to say is — to say nothing — only a good smacking kiss and many of them — and taking in return many, many, many, from my dear son — good loving ones too — which will do more credit to his lips than growling and complaining at his father. WALT.

IX

Brooklyn, September 9, 1870. DEAR SON. I wrote you a letter last Tuesday, 6th, which I suppose you have received. The last I have from you is yours of Sunday, 4th. I am still here in Brooklyn, quite busy with the printing. I have received a letter from John Rowland, who is working for me in the office, complaining that he has to work too hard,— I should think by his letter he means to back out of his bargain with me — if so, it will be a bad loss and inconvenience to me — But I shall not fret about it whatever happens. It is likely that this will shorten my leave, and that I shall have to come back and do my work myself, about the end of the month. Dear Pete, I hope you are having good times, and are in good spirits. We are having quite coolish weather here. The drivers wear their overcoats mornings and evenings. As I sit here writing

Friday afternoon, it is cloudy and threatens rain. I am going over to New York in an hour or so, and shall leave this in the P. O. and then go around awhile — possibly going to Niblo's Theatre, as they play Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* to-night, with Davenport and quite a bunch of stars in the piece. Son, I am afraid I shall not make out much of a letter this time, but you take it so hard when I don't write, I thought I would send a few lines — they would be better than nothing. God bless you, my loving boy — and farewell for this time. WALT.

X

Brooklyn, September 15, 1870. DEAR PETE. Your letters of 10th and 12th have come safe, and are welcome — dear son, I see that you are hard at work and appear to be in lively spirits — I am glad to hear you practice with the arithmetic — I wish you to try and do a little with it every day — practice makes perfect — you will see how soon and how clear it will all come to you — If you have the Geography or Atlas, look into that a little too — one needs to have an idea of the world too. I am concerned to hear of the death of Amos Dye — poor Amos — he was one of the first (I don't know but the very first) of the railroad men there I got acquainted with, and rode with — Pete if there is any further subscription for Mrs. Dye, I authorize you to put me down for $5. I will either send the money, or give it to

her when I return. I shall return in about three weeks. I am now in the eighth week of my furlough — it is seven weeks last Tuesday night since we parted there at the corner of 7th Street. Well Pete, dear loving boy, I must now close for to-day. WALT. *Late Friday afternoon, September 16.* DEAR SON. I have time to add only a few words, in order to put it in the mail this evening.— I am working a while every day at my printing yet — but I go around considerable — still go out in the bay — and enjoy myself among my friends here — and in riding around, etc.—The weather is very fine, both days and nights — I don't know whether I told you how I stand now about the war — suffice it to say, that as things have gone on, and as the case stands, I find myself now far more for the *French* than I ever was for the Prussians — Then I propose to take my first drink with you when I return, in celebration of the pegging out of the Pope and all his gang of Cardinals and priests — and entry of Victor Emanuel into Rome, and making it the capital of the great independent Italian nation. Good-bye till next time, darling boy. WALT.

XI

Brooklyn, Friday, September 23 [*1870*]. DEAR PETE. Your letter of last Sunday and Monday came safe — was glad to see you so cheerful and feeling well, as seemed plain by the tone of the letter. All

goes right with me. I am feeling well, and business matters move along as favorably as could be expected, taking all things in consideration. The weather is elegant — we had rain here too last Saturday and Sunday — and since then it has been clear and bright — I am out dashing around every day — fetch up home every night somewhere between 10 and 1 o'clock, quite tired. The river and bay get more and more beautiful, under these splendid September skies, the green waves and white foam relieved by the white sails of the crowds of ships and sail craft — for the shipping interest is brisker this fall than it has been for twelve years. Say to Harry Hurt, Mr. Shedd, Pensey and George Bell, Baley Murdock, George Smith, Dr. and Wash Milburn, or any of the railroad boys, or other friends that may inquire after me, that I send them my best respects — not forgetting my friends Mr. and Mrs. Nash — also Father Boyle — (By the bye, Pete, I have taken a great fearful drink of whiskey, in honor of the news that arrived night before last of Victor Emanuel entering Rome — I could n't wait.) Later — afternoon — It is now between 3 and 4 — I have been pitching in heavy to a great dish of stewed beef and onions mother cooked for dinner — and shall presently cross over to New York and mail this letter — shall probably go to some amusement with a friend this evening — most likely Buckley's Serenaders.—Pete, dear son. I hope this will

find you all right, and everything lovely — It will not be long now before I shall be back — till then, take care of yourself, my loving son. WALT.

XII

Brooklyn, Friday afternoon, September 29 [1870]. DEAR SON. I am sitting here in my room, having just eat a hearty dinner with my mammy (who has this month entered on her 76th year, but to my eyes looks young and handsome yet).—It is a dark and cloudy day and the rain is just now pouring down in torrents. It is a great disappointment to many, as Farragut's* funeral celebration was to come off to-day, and all the military, and departments here, and hundreds of societies, orders, schools, etc. had prepared to turn out — and most of them did turn out this forenoon, only to get soaked with rain, and covered with mud — I saw one crack battalion, all so spruce and handsome, with white pants, and silver gray coats, and everything so bright and trim when they marched down — and an hour and a half afterwards, they looked like draggled roosters that had been pumped on — we have had weeks and weeks of the very finest weather up to early this morning and now it is the worst kind to be out in. Still we want rain so very much, one don't feel to complain. Pete, I received your

* David Glasgow Farragut, the celebrated American admiral, b. in Tenn. 5 July, 1801, d. Portsmouth, N. H., 14 Aug., '70.

last letter, the 26th — it was a good long, lively letter, and welcome — you write about the Signal Corps — Allen deserves credit for persevering and studying — and I hope he will do well — and think he will too — for he is sober, and tries to get ahead — anyhow he is a young man I like — Thornett is a very intelligent manly fellow, cute, plucky, etc.— he has one fault, and a bad one — that is he will drink, and spree it — which spoils all — True it is none of my business, but I feel that it would be perhaps the making of him, if he would give it up, and find his pleasure in some other way — Pete, should you see Allen again, give him my love — and the same for Thornett also. Did you mean for me to write what I think of your joining the Signal Corps? But are you proficient enough in studies? — I heartily advise you to peg away at the arithmetic — do something at it every day — arithmetic is the foundation of all such things (just as a good stone wall is the foundation for a house) — become a good arithmetician first of all — and you *surely will, if you keep pegging away a little every day*—how much leisure you have after all, that might be used for study — I don't mean all your leisure, but say one hour out of every three — then keep looking over the Geography — when I come back I will bring a little pocket Dictionary — with 15 minutes writing every day, and correcting by the dictionary I would warrant you becoming a correct speller and

real handsome writer in a year or less—and when one is a fair arithmetician and spells and writes finely so many things are open to him. As things stand at present I expect to be back by or before next Sunday. WALT.

Behold this swarthy face, these gray eyes,
This beard, the white wool unclipt upon my neck,
My brown hands and the silent manner of me without charm;
Yet comes one a Manhattanese and ever at parting kisses me
lightly on the lip with robust love,
And I on the crossing of the street or on the ship's deck give a
kiss in return,
We observe that salute of American comrades land and sea,
We are those two natural and nonchalant persons.

Leaves of Grass (Ed'n 1892), p. 105.

Letters of 1871

I

Brooklyn, June 21, 1871. Dear Pete. I arrived home last night between 11 and 12 all safe and sound — found mother up waiting for me — It was dark and stormy, as rain had set in about 9 — had quite a pleasant journey — took a chair in the reserved seat car, 50 cents extra — plenty of room and a very easy riding car — thought while I was sitting up here now in my room waiting for dinner I would write a line to boy Pete. *Thursday forenoon.* The weather is very fine now here — plenty cool enough — I went over to New York yesterday afternoon and evening — took a ride up and down Broadway — am now laying off and taking it easy in my room — find it very pleasant here — fall just as natural into habits of doing nothing — lie on the sofa and read the papers — come up punctually to my meals — sleep a great deal — and take everything very quietly. *Friday* — Pete, I will finish this scribbling letter, and send it off so you will get it for Sunday — I am feeling well and enjoying myself doing nothing,

spending a great deal of time with my mother, and going out a few hours every day on the river or over to New York — I hope you are feeling all right, and that everything is lovely — I believe that is all this time — Love to you, dear son, and you must keep a good heart through all the tribulations and botherations, not only of railroading but life generally. I find that Foster the "Car assassin" is an old driver and conductor that I knew quite well — he was a very good man, very respectable, only a fool when drunk — it is the saddest case I know. He has three fine children — the public is down upon him savage — and I suppose no hope for him. WALT.

II

Brooklyn, July 7, 1871. DEAR PETE. Well here I am still, pretty much the same thing, doing nothing and taking things easy. By your letter I see that you too are jogging along about the same, on your car, with an occasional let up. Often in my jaunts around the City, or on the bay, I wish you were with me, as you would enjoy it much. I have seen Mr. Hart, formerly of the *Chronicle* — he is about the same in appearance as formerly. Pete, I will not write much this time, as I am feeling somewhat dull and stupid this forenoon. We had a fine shower last night, and there is some breeze — but it is pretty warm and oppressive — Pete, here

is a loving kiss for you, dear son, and much, much love for you, as ever, from your affectionate comrade and father. WALT.

III

Brooklyn, Friday, July 14 [1871]. DEAR PETE— It is pretty much the same with me, as when I wrote my former letters — still home here with my mother, not busy at anything particular but taking a good deal of comfort — It has been very hot here, but one stands it better here than in Washington, on account perhaps of the sea-air — I am still feeling well, and am out around every day. There was quite a brush in N. Y. on Wednesday — the Irish lower orders, Catholic, had determined that the Orange parade, Protestant, should be put down — mob fired and threw stones — military fired on mob —between 30 and 40 killed, over a hundred wounded — but you have seen all about it in papers — it was all up in a distant part of the City, three miles from Wall Street — five sixths of the City went on with its business just the same as any other day—I saw a big squad of prisoners carried along under guard — they reminded me of the squads of rebel prisoners brought in Washington, six years ago. The New York police looked and behaved splendidly — no fuss, few words, but *action* — great brown, bearded, able, American looking fellows (Irish stock, though, many of them)—I had great pleasure

in looking on them — something new, to me, it quite set me up to see such chaps, all dusty and worn, looked like veterans — Pete, dear son, I received your two letters, and was glad to get them. — Mother has been quite sick, and I have been sort of nurse, as she is here alone, none of my sisters being home at present — she is much better this morning, under my doctoring. Pete, I see by your letters that everything goes on right with you on the road — give my best regards to my friends among the drivers and conductors. Dear son, I shall now soon be coming back, and we will be together again, as my leave is up on the 22nd,— I am now going to take a bath and dress myself to go over to New York. Love to you, my dearest boy, and good bye for this time. WALT.

IV

[*Sunday,* 16 *July,* 1871.] *By the sea-shore, Coney Island, Sunday 3 p.m.* DEAR PETE—I will write you a few lines as I sit here, on a clump of sand by the sea shore — having some paper in my haversack, and an hour or two yet before I start back. Pete, I wish you were with me the few hours past — I have just had a splendid swim and souse in the surf — the waves are slowly rolling in, with hoarse roar that is music to my ears — the breeze blows pretty brisk from southwest, and the sun is partially clouded — from where I sit I look out on the bay

and down the Narrows, vessels sailing in every direction in the distance — a great big black long ocean steamship streaking it up toward New York — and the lines of hills and mountains, far, far away on the Jersey coast, a little veiled with blue vapor — here around me, as I sit it is nothing but barren sand — but I don't know how long I could sit here, to that soothing, rumbling murmuring of the waves — and then the salt breeze. *Friday, July* [21]. DEAR SON. I wrote the preceding nearly a week ago, intending to finish and send it then — Nothing very new or special with me — Mother has been quite unwell, gets better, then worse again — I have applied for a few days' further leave — The weather here remains nearly perfect — we have had but three or four uncomfortably hot days the past five weeks —every day a fine breeze smelling of the sea. Pete, if you are still working, and all is going on smooth, you can send me that $50. — You might get Mr. Milburn to send it to me by Post Office Order — give it to him with this envelope, and ask him to go to P. O. and send a P. O. Order to me — it will save you the trouble — But Pete, dear boy, if anything has turned up in meantime, you need n't send it, as I can get along otherwise — I am doing well, both in health and *business prospects* here — my book is doing first rate — so everything is lovely and the goose hangs high — Your loving comrade and father. WALT.

V

Brooklyn, Monday forenoon, July 24 [1871]. DEAR PETE—I received the $50 to-day all right, and a real help to me—I have money but I cannot have the use of it just now—so this comes first rate.—I spent yesterday down on the sea-shore, was all by myself, had a splendid good day, took my dinner with me—went down in the boat twelve miles in the morning, and back in a big open horse car toward evening through the fields and woods—very pleasant indeed—staid a long while in the water—weather perfect—Mother is better to-day—she has been pretty sick, with several ups and downs—I am as well as a fellow can be—eat and sleep tremendous—shall stay here a week or so longer—shall be back first part of next week if nothing happens—Well Pete, I believe that is all this morning—Good bye, my darling son, and a long, long kiss from your loving father. WALT.

VI

Brooklyn, July 28 [1871, *Friday*]. DEAR SON—I shall return on Monday next, in the 12.30 train from Jersey City—(the train I usually come in). Pete, I have received your letter of the 26th. Mother seems to-day full as well as usual—I continue all right—I have been on to New Haven, about 75 miles from here—a former friend of mine is in a dying condition there from consumption, and expressed such a strong

desire to see me, that I went on. I thought he would die while I was there—he was all wasted to a skeleton, faculties good, but voice only a low whisper—I returned last night, after midnight.—Well, bub, my time here is short—I have had a good quiet visit—the best in some respects yet—and I feel satisfied—My darling son, we will very soon be together again, your loving comrade, WALT.

Letters of 1872

I

Brooklyn, 107 North Portland Ave., Feb. 16, 1872.
DEAR PETE. Dear, dear son—We are having a very cold spell here, the severest of the winter—freezes up the pipes through the house, and burst them yesterday, causing great trouble—I too have got a bad cold, my head all stopped. I came through all right last Saturday, on time—quite a pleasant trip—Mother is very well, full as well as usual—I am having quiet good times, home with mother—stay in the house more than usual on account of the bitter cold (but go out two or three hours during the day). I will only write this very short letter to you this time, but send you my love, my darling son—I think about you every day, dear son—will write more soon—here is a kiss for you, dear loving son. WALT. Pete, I am making out a poor scraggy letter to you this time—I feel pretty well, but don't seem to feel like writing—Good bye for to-day, my loving boy. Your true Father and comrade always.

II

Brooklyn, Friday noon, Feb. 23 [1872]. Dear Son—Your letter received this morning speaks of the mild weather there—but it has been and remains very cold here—so much so that I don't go around half as much as I would like. My cold hangs on, though not so bad as at first. The state of the weather, and my cold, etc., have rather blocked me from having my usual enjoyment here, so far—but I expect to make up for it by and by. Dear son, I see you are off*—I take it by your letter that you are feeling well in health, and having as good a time as the law allows—I wish we could be together there, some of these moonlight nights—but here it is too cold for comfort—(the water pipes here froze again last night, causing trouble)—I go out a couple of hours middle of the day, but keep in nights—I have got the new edition of my book under way—and it will be satisfactory I think—It will be in one volume, and will make a better appearance than any of the former ones—Do you go up to the Debates in the Senate?—I see by the papers they are having high times—Senator Schurz appears to come out ahead of them all—he is a real good speaker—I enjoy the way he shakes them up (very much like a first class terrier in a pit, with a lot of rats). Pete, I send you $10 enclosed, as you may need it—Should you want more, you write, as I have plenty—I am

*I. e., off work.

writing this up in my back room, home — have had a nice breakfast of hot potatoes and first-rate Oregon salmon, with the best coffee that 's made — home-made bread and sweet butter — everything tip-top — get along well enough — you must try to do the same — so good-bye for this time, my own loving boy — WALT.

III

Brooklyn, Monday evening, March 4 [1872]. DEAR SON— I am sitting here in my room home, alone — it is snowing hard and heavy outside and cold and wintry as ever — there has not been one mild day here for the past three weeks — two thirds of the time spiteful and gusty wind and clouds of dust — and this with bitter cold — seems to me I have felt the cold more than for the last three winters — But I reckon I have said enough on this point.— Pete, I cannot write anything interesting to you as I do not go anywhere nor see anything new — I have attended to the bringing out the new edition of my book, but as the plates were all ready before, it is not much of a job — I am home every night (and half the days also). *Tuesday noon.* I am afraid this letter is not destined to be very cheering — I was attacked last night with sore throat, pretty bad — still I make out this morning to worry down a fair breakfast — the weather has been so infernal — last evening towards sundown, begun the spitefulest wind and cold I ever

knew, great clouds suddenly come up, inky black, and all of a sudden snow fell so thick and fast, it was like a dense fog,—so thick the hard wind did n't dissipate it in the least—this lasted about half an hour, and was about the highest old weather exhibition I ever witnessed—snow fell two inches thick in fifteen minutes. Dear Pete, how are you getting along?—how about Sailer and the R. R.?—I suppose slow and aggravating enough—by what you said in your last. Dear Pete, I don't think I shall stay here as long as I originally intended—I shall be back, by, or before, the end of this month—I am writing these lines home in the kitchen—mother is sitting in the rocking chair sewing something—and Eddy* is grinding some good coffee in a coffee mill—it smells good—(I have retreated to the kitchen for the hot fire—here now I am not like I am in Washington—you would laugh to see me hovering over the fire)—My darling son you must keep a good heart—don't get discouraged—love to you, baby, I enclose $10. —and can send you whatever you want—WALT.

IV

Brooklyn, Thursday forenoon [*March* 7, 1872]. DEAR SON—Well, I am still here, Pete, kept in pretty close quarters by the weather—but it seems to be

* Edward Whitman, a younger brother, who was imbecile. Walt Whitman always spoke of him as "crippled." He provided for Eddy during a large part of his (W. W.'s) life and made provision for his maintenance in his will. But Eddy died in 1892 only a few weeks after W. W.'s own death.

something of a let up this morning. There is nothing special to write about — but I thought I would send you a line this morning. I sent you a letter two days ago with $10.—(the second $10 I have sent) write me whether you received it all right. I hope you are not discouraged by the way things work on the road — It won't be very long now before I shall be back with you — Give my love to Mr. and Mrs. Nash — tell Wash Milburne I wish him success in the " graduate of pharmacy " line, and everything else — give him my love.— Pete, I believe that is all this time, dear baby, WALT. With a kiss from your loving father.

V

107 North Portland Ave., Brooklyn, March 15 [1872]. DEAR SON—I will just write you a line, as you may be looking for word from me Saturday. The weather has let up a little, but it is cold enough yet — I have been to the Italian Opera twice, heard Nilsson both times,— she is *very fine* — One night *Trovatore,* and one, *Robert,* with Brignoli—both good. I expect to return in about two weeks — I am writing this here in the kitchen, home,— I have deserted my own room this visit, as it is so cold even with a fire — Mother had a bad spell three days, commencing Sunday last — but is about as usual to-day and yesterday — We have splendid buckwheat cakes for breakfast — sometimes I fry them myself — I wish

you could just be here and eat breakfast — I think my mammy makes the best coffee in the world, and buckwheats ditto — mince-pies ditto.—My new edition * looks best yet — it is from the same plates as the last only in one volume bound handsomely in green cloth — my books are beginning to do pretty well — I send you the publisher's slip.—Well, Pete, I believe that is all this time. Remember me to any of the boys on the road that may inquire for me — also Adrian Jones, that works in the theatre — it is now after ten, Friday forenoon, clear, cold, and windy — and I am going over to New York to have a lot of my books sent to England by to-morrow's steamer. Dear son, I send my best love, as always. We will soon be together again, dear son. WALT.

VI

Brooklyn, Friday forenoon, March 22 [1872]. DEAR PETE—I received your letter yesterday. Pete, you must be quite steady at work, and no time to spare. Well, perhaps it is just as satisfactory considering all things. The cold weather has just kept on here, as before — cold enough all the time — and then a spell of damned bitter stinging cold every now and then extra — not one single mild warm day since I have been home — six weeks — I am middling well, go out some every day, but not

* *I. e.*, the '72 edn. of the *Leaves*. The '71 edn. was issued in pale green *paper* covers — the '72 in dark green cloth.

much — Best thing is my *eating* and *sleeping* — I fall back on them altogether — I sleep splendid, have a good bed, plenty of cover — get up pretty early though and make the fire, and set things agoing, before mother comes out — she has had some bad times with rheumatism, etc. — one hand and arm quite disabled — still she is very cheerful, looks well in the face, and does more work cooking, etc., than most young women — We have grand breakfasts, buckwheat cakes, coffee, etc., eggs, etc. — just wish you could come in mornings and partake. We two* always breakfast together, and it is first rate — So you see I fall back upon sleeping and eating, (as I said) — Should be glad to see Parker Milburn — hope he will call to-day — I send you a paper by mail. Well, Pete, I believe that is all, this time. Good bye, my darling son — So the *new shirts* turn out a success, do they? I have a great mind to be jealous — Give my love to Wash Milburn, Adrian Jones, and all the R. R. boys. Your loving old WALT.

VII

Brooklyn, Friday afternoon [*March* 29, 1872]. DEAR BOY PETE—I have received your letter, and the paper with the account of Mr. Huntington's death — it seems a sudden and sorrowful thing — Pete, I shall continue here another week — I see

* *I. e.*, his mother and himself.

you are working [it] appears quite steady—I continue pretty well — Mother is middling — This last two days the weather has been real pleasant — I have been out most of the time — It is now between 4 and 5 — I am writing this up in my room, home — am going out, and over to New York this evening — Nothing special to write about — Pete, my darling boy, I have been writing some long letters on business, etc. — and feel very little like writing (so I will just dry up for this occasion), here is a good buss to you, dear son, from your loving father always.

VIII

Brooklyn, Friday forenoon, April 5 [1872]. DEAR SON — I expect to be back in Washington next week — somewhere in the middle of the week. — I am well — Mother is pretty well — I received your letter three days since — Pete, things must be going on about the same as ever. — As I write it is pleasant weather, and I am going out to get the good of it — Pete, take care of yourself till I see you, dear boy. WALT.

IX

Brooklyn, 107 North Portland Ave., June 14 [1872]. DEAR SON — I got home all right Saturday night — and have been having quite a good time. There is nothing very new—Mother is well as usual.

I shall print my College poem* in a small book — it will be small — and is intended as the beginning of a larger one — I am having it set up at the printing office — will send you one in ten or twelve days. Pete, how are you getting along? I suppose on 14 the same as when I was there — I see by the papers that the head men have mostly migrated from Washington, and that it is said to be hot and dull enough there. — Do you see anything of Mr. Tasistro? † — I received the letter he sent to the office for me — I am writing this in the house in Portland Av. — we are having a showery afternoon — Good bye, my darling boy — and I will try to write again soon (and a more interesting letter) —WALT.

X

Brooklyn, June 18, 1872. DEAR PETE — I am having a better time here than I had my last visit. The weather is very pleasant — pretty hot during the middle of the day, but mornings and nights perfect — No moonlight walks out beyond Uniontown here —

* The poem referred to was read by W. W. at "Commencement," Dartmouth College, N. H., 26 June, '72, on invitation of the United Literary Societies. It was afterwards printed in a small volume which was called by the name of this poem: *As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free and Other Poems.* Washington, D. C., 1872. In the current *Leaves* (1891–2) it will be found, p. 346, under the heading: "Thou Mother with thy Equal Brood."

† Count Michael Tasistro, of French-Irish parentage, came originally to this country with a hunting party of French noblemen. He remained here permanently and, becoming poor, supported himself by teaching French and by literary work. He died while engaged in the translation of the Comte de Paris' *History of the Civil War.*

but I go on the river and cross to and fro in the pilot house. Last night was beautiful—Saturday I spent at Coney Island—went in swimming—Mother is only middling—has some pretty bad spells with rheumatism—will break up here, and go with my brother George to Camden, N. J., in September. I suppose you got a letter from me last Saturday, as I wrote you the day before. Pete, dear son, if you should want any of your money send me word. It is either $120 or $130 (I am not sure—but I have a memorandum in my desk at Washington)—I am feeling real well, and I hope you are too, my loving boy. WALT.

XI

Hanover, N. H., Thursday, June 27 [1872]. DEAR SON—I will write you just a line to show you I am here away north, and alive and kicking. I delivered my poem here before the College yesterday. All went off very well.—(It is rather provoking—after feeling unusually well this whole summer,—since Sunday last I have been about half sick and am so yet, by spells.) I am to go to Vermont for a couple of days, and then back to Brooklyn.—Pete, I received your letter, that you had been taken off—write to me Saturday, 30th, or Sunday—direct to usual address, 107 Portland Ave., Brooklyn. I will send you the little book with my poem (and others), when I get back to Brooklyn. Pete, did my poem appear

in the Washington papers — I suppose Thursday or Friday — *Chronicle* or *Patriot?* If so send me one — (or one of each).— It is a curious scene here, as I write, a beautiful old New England village, 150 years old, large houses and gardens, great elms, plenty of hills — every thing comfortable, but very Yankee — *not an African to be seen all day* — not a grain of dust — not a car to be seen or heard — green grass everywhere — no smell of coal tar.— As I write a party are playing base ball on a large green in front of the house — the weather suits me first rate — cloudy but no rain. Your loving WALT.

XII

Brooklyn, June 30 [1872]. DEAR BOY — I received your letter of Tuesday last, and was glad to hear everything was going on all right. I am well, and still enjoying myself in a quiet way — I have been home every evening since I come — but out quite a good deal in the day — the weather is splendid here — plenty cool enough. This has got to be a great place for boating — all the rich men have their yachts, and most every young man belongs to a boat or yacht club — sometimes of a pleasant day, especially Sunday, you will see them out all over up and down the bay in swarms — the yachts look beautiful enough, with white sails and many with white hulls and their long pennants flying — it is a new thing to see them so plenty. *11 o'clock, Friday*

forenoon. Pete, I am sitting in my room, home, finishing this — have just had a bath, and dressed myself to go over to New York, partly on business — shall go down and put this in the P. O. here — shall walk down, as it is a very pleasant forenoon.— When you write tell me if you have read Charles Reade's novel of *Foul Play* — if not, I have one here I will send you — Dear son, I believe that is all this time — I send my love, dear son, and a good loving kiss — I think of you every day — Give my best regards to all enquiring friends, and inform them I expect to be back in about three weeks — Good bye, my darling boy,— from your comrade and father. WALT.

XIII

Brooklyn, July 12 [1872]. DEAR SON PETE — I have been sick — but am feeling better now, and soon expect to be all right. Mother too is unwell. I expect to remain here ten or twelve days longer. Pete, I will only write a short letter this time — Love to you, dear son. WALT.

XIV

New York, Friday afternoon, July 19 [1872]. DEAR BOY PETE — I received your letter yesterday — nothing very new with me — am better than I was when I wrote you before — shall return to Washington next week, somewhere about the middle

of the week. Pete, you must try to keep good heart — Perhaps this will find you at work again — if not, you must keep up a cheerful heart all the same. I have just been spending a couple of hours with Joaquin Miller — I like him real well. $10. enclosed. WALT.

Letters of 1873

I

[1873.] DEAR PETE — I have been very unwell — but am better again—at least at the present moment. I am stopping at Mr. Ashton's, 1202 K St. next door to the southwest corner of K and 12th*—come up and see me—I wrote you a line two days ago, to Milburn's—Did you get it? WALT.†

II

Camden,‡ May 31 [1873]. I expect to return Monday,§ June 2, between half past 5 and 6, but probably too late to see you that evening. Come up Tuesday. I am about the same as to my sickness—no worse. WALT.

* In Washington.

† This note was probably written between 1st and 26th Jan., '73. Between it and the next letter in this volume intervene *Letters in Sickness* (26 Jan. to 16 May, '73) written to his mother, and printed in *In Re Walt Whitman*, pp. 73-92.

‡ Walt Whitman left Washington the 20th May—pretty sick—left arm and leg paralyzed—and for a time lived with his brother George in Camden, N. J.

§ He almost certainly did not return to Washington as intended—see, *infra*, letter of 28 Aug., '73.

III

322 Stevens St., Camden, N. J. Wednesday forenoon, June 18 [1873]. DEAR PETE—It has been a good move of me coming here, as I am pleasantly situated, have two rooms on 2d floor, with north and south windows, so I can have the breeze through—I can have what I wish in the grub line, have plenty of good strawberries—and my brother and sister are very kind—It is very quiet, and I feel like going in for getting well—There is not much change so far—but I feel comparatively comfortable since I have been here—and better satisfied—My brother is full of work (inspecting pipe manufactured here at the foundries for water works and sewers in Northern cities)—he is in splendid health—a great stout fellow—weighs more than I do—he is building a handsome new house here, to be done latter part of August. *Thursday, 19th.* Nothing very new—I have had some bad feeling in the head yesterday afternoon and this morning—but it will pass over no doubt—It is warm weather here, days, but pleasant nights so far—Pete, when you get the *Star* save it and send to me—you can send two in a wrapper with a one cent stamp. (I enclose some, for fear you have n't any.) *Friday, 20th.* Pretty hot weather here and needs rain badly—I am about the same—feel pretty well for a while, and then have a bad spell—have distress in the head at times, but keep up a good heart—or at any rate try to.—Give

my respects to all enquiring friends—tell them I expect to return to Washington in about a couple of months—tell me who you meet, and every little thing, and who asks about me, etc., as it will interest me.—I have made a raise of some new summer clothes, real nice—thin black pants and vest, a blue flannel suit, and some white vests.—Love to Wash Milburn—let him read this letter if he wishes—Write how you are getting along.—Good bye, dear son.

WALT.

IV

[*Camden*] *Thursday evening, June 26* [1873]. DEAR PETE — I received your note to-day. I send you a note I have written to Mr. Edmunds,—first take it to Mr. Noyes (to whom it is enveloped), and get an additional line I have requested from him—and then, if you conclude to try for the carrier's place,—go up and take it yourself to Mr. Edmunds. I must tell you another thing. I have written (wrote yesterday) a short note to Mr. Dubarry, your superintendent, asking him if you could n't be better placed when the changes of the Baltimore connection are made. It may not amount to anything but I took a notion to write it. Pete, I am not having a very good time—my head troubles me—yesterday was as bad as ever—as far from well as ever—to-day I am a little easier, and have been out a few steps. But I keep up a good heart, dear son—and you must too.

WALT. If you conclude not to try for the carrier's berth, let the letters go.

V

322 Stevens St., Camden, N. J., Monday [July] 7 [1873]. DEAR SON — I am only able to write the same old story — since I last wrote, I have had some pretty bad spells — suffered at intervals all last week, and yesterday, with the strange and painful distress in the head, I have had so much of — But I feel better to-day — Every time I feel better, I find myself much encouraged — I still stick here, as I don't dare to trust myself in a strange place, if I can help it. I received your letter telling me you was too late to get any chance for the letter carrier's position — and about Mr. Noyes' friendliness — Are things just the same, as far as you and your crew are concerned? — I think about you every night — I reproach myself that I did not fly around when I was well, and in Washington, to find some better employment for you — now I am here, crippled, laid up for God knows how long, unable to help myself, or my dear boy. — I do not miss anything of Washington here, but *your visits* — if I could only have a daily visit here such as I had there — I go out very little here — there is not much convenience here, for me to go out — one car line, passing about two squares off, consists of four cars, running semi-occasionally — and another line, about 3½ squares the other way, has I believe 6 or 7 cars —

I get out and take a ride in them sometimes — my best jaunt is going in them to the ferry, and crossing on the boat to Philadelphia, to and fro, several times — But a great portion of the time I do not feel able to go out alone — fortunately I do not have any dizzy spells, nor any symptoms of them, so far, — so I am not worried about that when I am out — As I write this it is a very pleasant cool afternoon and I am sitting here by the window in a big easy chair. Pete, I hope this will find you feeling well, and in good spirits. — Write me a good long letter and tell me everything — it will do you good — how does the new time go on the road, since Baltimore Tunnel connection? — how about Washington — Tasistro — every body? Get a good sheet of paper, and sit down in the Park, with your lead pencil — I send you an envelope — also some one cent stamps. — Love to you, dear boy — keep up a good heart — I do yet — though it is a long and hard pull sometimes with me lately.

WALT.

VI

Camden, Tuesday afternoon, July 15 [1873]. DEAR PETE—There is nothing new or different with me — I am no better in any respect, don't know what is going to come out of it all — We are having pretty hot weather here just now, but it does not affect me much — it is not near as oppressive here as the Washington heat — I received your letter, my dear son —

with the paper — I will write more to-morrow. *Wednesday afternoon.* Pete, I have little to write to you about, as I remain anchored here in the house nearly all the time. As I write I am sitting in my mother's former room, in her old arm-chair. — Spend a great deal of my time here, as I have n't felt like going out lately — half a block tires me. Pete, my darling son, I still think I shall weather it but time only can show — Mother's death is on my mind yet,* time does not lift the cloud from me at all — I want much to get to the sea-shore, either Long Island or the Jersey coast, and shall make a start if I get strong enough — It is not so hot here to-day. So long, my darling boy. WALT.

VII

Camden, Thursday noon, July 24, 1873. DEAR SON PETE: — It is the same old story with me — the best I can say is that I don't seem to get worse, even if I don't get better. Your letter came, and the *Star,* with the item about Tasistro. It must be very hot there in Washington, but you stand it better than most any one I know. I too never used to think anything of heat or cold, from 20 to 50 — but last summer I felt the heat severely, for the first time. Pete, as I have told you several times, I still think I shall get over this, and we will be together again and have some good times — but for all that it is best for you to be

* Mrs. Whitman died May 23, 1873.

prepared for something different — my strength can't stand the pull forever, and if continued must sooner or later give out — Now Pete, don't begin to worry, boy, or cry about me, for you haven't lost me yet, and I really don't think it is likely yet — but I thought it best to give a word of caution, if such a thing should be — I am quite comfortable here and have everything I want — I went out at ½ past 5 yesterday afternoon, and rode in the cars here to the ferry, and crossed the Delaware from Camden to Philadelphia four or five times — very pleasant. To-day is burning hot, but I am feeling as well as usual. *Friday, 25th, 4 o'clock.* Pretty hot again to-day here, but not so oppressive to bear as in Washington — I am feeling about as usual to-day — shall try to get out a few steps after I send this — Good bye for this time, dear loving son. WALT.

VIII

Pete, you must read this over Sunday, as a ten minutes' talk like, about all sorts of odds and ends.

Camden, Friday afternoon, Aug. 1 [1873]. DEAR SON — Your letter is received to-day, and enclosed I send you $20. — I want you to write soon — as I shall want to know if it reached you safe. I am feeling relieved of the worst distress in the head now for the last two days — had it straight along bad enough the first three days in the week — but yesterday and to-day it has mostly let up — have been out to-day, and

over to Philadelphia — it is hard work, especially as I have no one to go with me — but I put a bold face on, *and my best foot foremost* — Is Wash Milburn there in the store ? or has he gone on his vacation in the country? — answer me in your next — I think of writing a few lines to him — Hot weather here, but I don't suffer much from it — though I think it is bad for me, and I hope much more from the cool season, if I get through this — Pete, I too see quite a good deal of railroad, and hear more — some 70 rods off is the great depot of the Camden and Amboy, bells and whistles and trains rumbling continually, night and day, and lots of R. R. men living near, around here — if I only felt just a little better I should get acquainted with many of the men, which I could very easily do if I would. I should much like to go on the trips so handy and cheap, right as you might from my door, to Cape May, or to Long Branch, etc., to say nothing of the numerous fine jaunts from Philadelphia G. R. R., or up or down the Delaware by steamboat — If you was only here to convoy me — but I suppose no one is to have *everything* wanting — (Pete, dear son, there was $89. coming to you, of the money you put in my charge, and now there will be $69. yet due you from me — your own soap) — As I write it is 4½ o'clock Friday afternoon — I am sitting here alone, in the 2nd story front room — every thing quiet here — I received the other letter, and *Sunday Chronicle* — When you write, tell me who you see,

and everything. — I like such letters far better than the formal ones some send me — I had a visit from a good, kind-hearted, rather queer old fellow named Ingram, from Philadelphia — he said he see* in the Philadelphia paper I was laid up very sick in Camden — so he came over and hunted for hours through the hot sun, found me at last — he evidently had thought I was keeled up, and hard up, and he came to offer help — he has been a great traveler, is English by birth — I found him good company, and was glad to see him — he has been twice — so you see there are good souls left — Pete, when you see Judge Fisher tell him I shall yet be back all right one of these days, and in the mean time tell him I send him my love — also my love to Mr. and Mrs. Nash the next time you go there — So good bye for the present, my darling son, and you must keep good heart, for I do, though it is pretty glum around and over me sometimes. WALT.

IX

Camden, August 22 [1873]. DEAR SON — I received your letter of last Saturday and Sunday — and was interested in reading all the particulars you wrote about the R. R., etc., and the young man, your friend the fireman — poor fellow, it was indeed a sad fate — There has been great washing away and trouble with R. R. tracks hereabout too — for myself

* So in MSS.

I never remember an August with so much rain — Write to me whether your road has repaired damages, and is running through again — also everything you think of and see about people and Washington, etc., that would interest me — as I live a very quiet life here. I am still about the same as when I last wrote — am no worse and not much better — though I perceive my general strength is at least as good as any time since I have been sick — my head still troubles me with pain and distress a good deal of the time — I hobble out a little every day when not prevented by the rain — and console myself with thinking that everything with me might be a great deal worse — I can put up with all but the death of my mother — that is my great sorrow that sticks — affects me just as much now, or more, than at the time. Have you seen Mr. Eldridge since his return to Washington? — Have you seen anything of Mr. O'Connor? — (You know he is now Chief Clerk of the Light House Board) — You must have had a sweet time with Dr. Duncan and Dr. Blake, (though I must confess I rather like the latter,) — I suspect he has some real good points) — sometimes when one has plenty of time, I think it very good, for a change, to let such fellows buzz you to their heart's content, when you fall in with them — think of them as acting a part for your amusement — how well they do it — if they could only do it on the stage, it would make their fortune — So Mr. Tasistro still lives — he

deserves great credit for his perseverance and vitality — I hope he will come to the top of the heap yet — I cut out the piece below from a Philadelphia paper, thinking it might interest you — As I sit here in my arm-chair, finishing this, it is 3 o'clock Friday afternoon, it clouds up again as if for rain, we had a shower last night — it was quite cool, but has been pretty warm here for two days, and is now — I am feeling as if I would and should come out all right yet — had a nice dinner — Pete, dear son, send me the *Sunday Herald,* Aug. 24 — don't forget — So long, dear son. WALT.

X

Camden, Thursday evening, [Aug. 28, 1873]. PETE DEAR SON. I am not sinking nor getting worse — I have had some very bad times, and have some pretty bad ones yet, mostly with my head — and my leg is about as useless as ever — still I am decidedly no worse, and I think now I am even *getting better* — it is slow and with great alternations — but I have the feeling of getting more strength, and easier in the head — something like what I was before Mother's death — I cannot be reconciled to that yet — it is the great cloud of my life — nothing that ever happened before has had such an effect on me — but I shall get well, yet, dear son, probably (of course not certainly), and be back in Washington this fall, and we will be together again.

I think I am now about as I was the day you came down to Baltimore Depot with me — 20th May, I think. *Friday after dinner.* I have thought of you the nights of this week, the heaviest rains here almost ever known, great trouble and loss to railroads — was you in any tight spot? — that described in your last made me feel a little nervous — That was a fearful disaster of the Wawasset — sad beyond description — So Tasistro is around yet — The *Chronicle* came — Mr. Eldridge has returned to Washington from his month's leave — he stopped here and paid me a 3 or 4 hour's visit — John Burroughs has an article in the Sept. number of *Scribner's Magazine,* just out, in which I am extracted from — Pete, it is now towards 3, and I am going to try to get down to the Ferry boat, and cross to Philadelphia — so you see I am not altogether disabled — but it is awful tough work — when the weather is cooler (which will be soon), I shall be better off in Washington, as it is very lonesome to me here, and no one to convoy me — I shall return there — I want to get a couple of unfurnished rooms, or top floor, somewhere on or near the car route — Pete, if you see Charley Toner give him my love, and ask him to give you his address to send me — He works in the Printing Bureau (M'Cartee's) Treasury. Goodbye, my dear loving boy. WALT.

XI

Camden, Friday noon, Sept. 5 [1873]. DEAR BOY PETE. Your letter, with cheering wishes and prophecies, came last Tuesday, God bless you, boy, — for all such things help much — I had a bad spell this morning — have something of the kind pretty often — still it seems certain I am improving, generally, — and that my general strength is better, I am not near as bad as I was five weeks ago — have some hours in which I feel quite like myself again — keep up good heart nearly all the time — and you must too, dear son. So I see Beau Hickman* has died of a stroke of paralysis — in the paper this morning I see a piece about his body being resurrected from Potter's field. Pete, I see a collision of some trains on the B. & P. road reported in the tunnel at Baltimore yesterday morning early in which a brakeman named Hankinson was instantly killed—I was over to Philadelphia yesterday — there is a large reading room, the Mercantile Library, 10th St. where I go occasionally — it is quite handy — they have all the papers from everywhere — have the *Washington Chronicle, Capital,* etc. Then I took a ride in the Market St. cars, and was caught in a violent rain at ½ past 7 coming home — the moment I got home it stopt, and cleared off a

* "Beau" Hickman was a familiar character in Washington, a decayed dandy, who made periodical visits through the Capitol and the Departments, picking up a living from the contributions of Congressmen and Government officials, many of whom were his regular patrons.

beautiful moonlit night. It is clear and pretty hot here to-day — I am sitting here in the front room, in the same big old mahogany chair I gave mother 20 years ago, by the open window writing this — I am feeling better since breakfast. Pete, the papers you sent came last Monday all right — I have received a letter from Chas. Eldridge — and another from Walter Godey, the young man who is working for me as my substitute in the office — all was going on well in the office — I send a couple of papers to-day—nothing particular—send the *Herald*. Did I tell you that a doctor I have talked with here says my real disease is *the brain not being properly furnished and nourished with blood?* — (it is a disease the doctors call *cerebral anaemia*) — the doctor says it has been long a-coming, and will be long a-going — says I will get over it though — says the paralysis comes from that, and that it (the paralysis) is not very formidable — I am following Dr. Drinkard's advice, taking no medicine, living very carefully. WALT.

XII

Camden, Friday afternoon, Sept. 12 [1873]. DEAR BOY PETE. It is a very fine September day here — it must be delightful down in Virginia — the sun shines just warm enough and there is a slight haze, which makes it just right — I have been out just a little but was glad to get back — I am feeling

Louisa Whitman, Mother of Walt Whitman, 1855
From a daguerreotype in possession of Horace L. Traubel, Esq.

tolerable, but my leg still gives out in a few minutes' walk — I have had two or three quite good spells this week, sufficient to arouse my hopes, but am in a pretty bad way yet — however, I am not without some pretty steady *small* expectations, if not great ones. I am enough better to be perceptible, and to make me in hopes of being better still — (but I have so many times got a little better, only to fall back again as bad as ever, or worse) — I have just had my dinner, nice beefsteak, potatoes, etc. My appetite still holds out — and my sister cooks very nice, gets me what I want. — Pete, your letter of Sept. 1, came safe — also the *Herald* and *Republican* — I send you Philadelphia papers. My brother Jeff has been on here this week from St. Louis — got in a car in St. Louis, 6 Saturday evening, week ago, took off his boots for easy shoes, and (sleeping, he says, very well and sound in his bed on the car) had his meals regular and got in here at Philadelphia about 9 o'clock Monday morning, in the same car (which went on to New York) — He is now out on a good yacht excursion, from N. Y. out in the sound and sea, for a week — quite a voyage — He only stopped here 3 or 4 hours — but is to return last of the month — both my brothers are stout and hearty, and full of business, and interested in it thoroughly — and doing well. I hear quite often from John Burroughs — he has bought a spot of land, right on the Hudson River, about 80

miles from N. Y. and is building himself a house there, right on a steep bank with the road on one side, and the river on the other (but sufficient space between) a 2½ story stone house — I have heard from Charley Towner — I got a very nice letter from him Thursday — he said you met him Tuesday and told him — A long while ago, I wanted to get a house in conjunction with Charley and his family — where I could have a couple of rooms, and they could see to them — and that was one thing I wanted to write to him about, to see if we could do it now — but he tells me his wife is quite sick — I quite pricked up my ears to read the short interview between Mr. Dubarry and you, and what he said about the *schedule,* etc. — I see you are a little nervous, Pete — and I don't wonder, nor blame you — Still the true point to attain is (like a good soldier, or officer), to keep on the alert, to do one's duty fully, without fail — and leave the rest to God Almighty. I was reading the paper here this morning, and I see a list of some new inventions said to work first rate, among the rest this* for car coupling — I wonder if there is anything in it — It is awful the way men are slaughtered of late years on the trains — there must be three or four hundred every year, take the country through — and the papers put 'em in in items of three or four lines,

* Referring to a short newspaper article on "A New Car Coupler" which he pastes in his letter.

down somewhere out of the way — such a thing as the killing of that young man Harkinson, in the Baltimore tunnel, a grand, magnificent young *man,* no doubt — (while half the papers in the land have had long obituaries and notices of the death of that rotten old apple, Beau Hickman*). Well, son, I have made out quite a letter for you this time — My brother and I have been talking about the balloon splurge in New York — my brother is quite a balloonist, in his belief — believes that something will yet come of it — I see they advertise to go yet, perhaps this afternoon — but it is a wild undertaking — (perhaps an advertising humbug) anyhow. I shall still remain here for the present — everything seems to be going on smooth in the office at my desk, from what I hear from my substitute — He writes me now and then, does my work very well, and more work besides, — Dear Pete, I am much in hopes I shall be able to send some news before long about my improvement for good — and something definite about my coming back to Washington — So long, dear son — you must try to keep up a gay heart and let the world wag on as it may. WALT.

XIII

Camden, Friday afternoon, Sept. 19 [1873]. DEAR BOY PETE. Your letter came all right last Tuesday.

* See note on page 101.

I still keep the same — no worse, and no better. It is the same old story. I have a great deal of pain in my head yet — no let up. Dear son, I would like to write you a good long amusing letter — but I cannot to-day. We have had a rainy night and forenoon — but as I write the sun is shining out again — and I must get out and drag myself around a little for a change. Farewell, my loving son, till next time. WALT. I send a small bundle of papers.

XIV

Camden, Friday noon, 26th Sept. [1873]. DEAR SON PETE. Your letter of yesterday came this forenoon — that was a rather serious runaway of cars in the tunnel a week ago — and mighty lucky to get off as you all did — Pete, I got a few lines from Parker Milburn — he told me you had a very bad sore on a finger of right hand — they are plaguey bad things — I am in hopes yours will partly make up in giving you a little resting spell. I sent you *The Children of the Abbey,* an old novel that used to be all the rage — did you get it? To-day there is a great turn-out and dedication of the *Masonic Temple* in Philadelphia — it is truly a handsome and noble building. A rain last night here, and to-day is really perfect. The Camden Free Masons marched by here this morning, about 250, the finest collection of men I thought I ever saw, but poor music, all

brass, a lot of fat young Dutchmen blowing as if they would burst, and making a hell of a hullabaloo — Pete, I am about the same — may be a little improved in general strength — had bad spells a good deal all the earlier part of the week — some very bad — but feel better yesterday and to-day — I am making some calculations of the cool weather— think it may be favorable to me — did not go out any yesterday — shall try to get out this afternoon a couple of hours — I don't know a soul here,— am entirely alone — sometimes sit alone and think, for two hours on a stretch — have not formed a single acquaintance here, any ways intimate — My sister-in-law is very kind in all housekeeping things, cooks what I want, has first rate coffee for me and something nice in the morning, and keeps me a good bed and room — all of which is very acceptable — (then, for a fellow of my size, the friendly presence and magnetism needed, somehow, is not here — I do not run foul * of any) — still I generally keep up very good heart — still think I shall get well — When I have my bad spells I wait for them to fade out — I have got a letter from Charley Towner — I am finishing this by the open window — still in the rooms where my mother died, with all the old familiar things — but all drawing to a close, as the new house is done, and I shall move on Monday. WALT.

* A nautical term = "run up against."

XV

Camden, Friday afternoon, Oct. 3 [1873]. DEAR PETE, DEAR SON. I received your letter the first of the week, and was interested in your account of your week, of laying off, and of the playing of the band under Schneider and Petrola — also about City R. R. men — I send my love and best respects to all of them — I have had a bad spell again this week — for three days I have had a succession of those *blurs* again — only very much worse than ever before — last night I slept pretty well, and have n't had any of them yet, to-day, but my head feels sore and ready to have them, almost if I move across the room — I am sitting here, feeling pretty bad, my head unsettled and dizzy — I don't go out any more — but am up and dressed — Still Pete, I do not get discouraged but think it will pass over, and I shall feel better, and strong enough to come back to Washington. Still I don't know, I think it best to face my situation — it is pretty serious. I send you a card — and if I should get bad, I will certainly send you word, or telegraph — I will write Monday or Tuesday next — We have moved into my brother's new house — I am up in the 3rd story room, fronting south — the sun is shining in bright — it is beautiful October weather here — My brother had a large room, very handsome, on second floor, with large bay window fronting west, built for me, but

I moved up here instead, it is much more retired, and has the sun — I am very comfortable here indeed, but my *heart* is blank and lonesome utterly. *11 o'clock* A.M. *sitting by the window 1st floor.* I have just been talking with a young married R. R. man, Thomas Osler, I fell in with — he has a bad bone-gathering on his left hand, a sort of felon, suffered greatly with it 5 days and nights — had it lanced yesterday, and is better — he stood by the open window 1st floor, and talked with me, while I sat in an arm-chair inside — he is a regular R. R. man — you could tell by the cut of his jib, low collar, cap, clean shirt (for holiday), dark complexion, and hard dark hands, I took quite a fancy to him and, *of course,* I suppose he did to me — I believe he works on the locomotive — Pete, you must tell me how you put in the past week — I like such a letter as your last one — written two or three different times — It gave me a good idea of what you are doing — and also of how things look in Washington — I have written a line to Col. Hinton and shall write a line to Eldridge.

3 o'clock P.M. My head is feeling very sore and touchy and sensitive — I don't go out — I have rewritten my will — What little I have to leave I have left mainly to my lame brother Ed., poor man — Pete, I have left you $200. and my gold watch — (but it will be much better for us to spend the money together, and I have no doubt we shall do

so). This house is quite pleasant — it is on the corner — fronts south — side to west — plenty of light and air and view — This afternoon I am quite in hopes I am getting better of my spells to-day, as I have not had any actual spells though I have felt pretty sick all day. But I have been up all day, and eat quite a bite for dinner — Pete, I have written plainly, because I want you to be prepared if anything should happen to me — but I tell you *honest,* I still think I shall pull through — and that I shall be able to write better news early next week — don't you be alarmed yet. WALT.

XVI

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. J. Thursday noon, Oct. 9 [1873]. DEAR SON. Your letter of 8th, came this morning — you did perfectly right — I believe you are the greatest comfort I have, and if I get well our love and attachment will be closer than ever. As I write it is about noon, and I am sitting up in my room, with a window open and the bright sun streaming in. I have confused spells of the head, and have just had one, lasting about 20 minutes — they are not so bad and prostrating as those of last week — I have to just sit still and wait till they pass over. I eat my breakfast with relish this morning, salmon, graham bread and coffee, etc. But did not rest well last night. John Burroughs has been to see me, — staid a day

and night — he has settled up and sold out in Washington and left — He is building a home on the Hudson River, 75 miles from N. Y. — has 10 acres of land on west side of river. I am feeling quite bad to-day about a 13 year old boy, Rob Evans, I know here, next door but one — he has had his eye very badly hurt, I fear it is put out, the doctor has given it up — by an arrow yesterday, the boys playing — I thought quite a good deal of him, he would do anything for me — his father was French, and is dead — the boy suffers very much — and the misfortune is a very, very sad one. It is now ¼ after 12 — and everything looks so sunny and inviting out, I am going to try to get out on the walk for a few minutes — but I don't navigate as well as I did before I left Washington. *Friday afternoon, ½ past 2.* Another beautiful day — I enjoy it, but cannot go around in it — I went out yesterday, not far but was badly overcome before I got back. At present my head cannot stand anything. Still, to-day I am feeling rather better than usual. I have eaten my dinner — beefsteak and potatoes, with pumpkin pie and a cup of tea—I eat very moderately but with quite a relish. Dear Pete, serious as these spells are, (and seems as if they *will* continue to come on,) I still have abiding hopes and trust of my recovery yet — though I don't want to be too confident, and wanted you to be prepared for whatever might happen. I shall write a line to-day to

Charles Eldridge — I am glad you have got some acquainted with him — I know him thoroughly — he is a thoroughly good and true man — has some ways and notions of his own, but the main things are as *solid* as the hills — Hinton too is a real good, kind man — Now, dear son, don't worry about me — I think in all probability we shall yet be together and that I shall come round to be wholly or partially better — but whichever way it goes with me, it will be all right — your latest two letters have been *first rate* — I read the one before the last, many times,—it is very dear to me. WALT.

XVII

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, Oct. 16 [1873], *2 p.m. Thursday.* DEAR SON. I sent you a postal card yesterday that the bundle had come all right, with the right things I wanted. My condition is still what may be called favorable — that is I still keep up without having any of those decidedly bad spells — blurs, as I call them, of a while ago — and in general I feel as well and as strong (such as it all was) as before I was taken with those spells. I go out again a little. Pete, I told you about a young railroad man, Tom Osler, 26 years old, that I met occasionally and talked with, that had a felon on his hand — I took quite a fancy to him and he to me — Well, he is dead, killed

instantly — (I have marked the piece in the paper already sent) — I went around yesterday to where he lived, it is near here, he was married, leaves a young widow, and a nice little two year old boy — I saw them — his body broken and scalded, lay in the front room. Whenever you have the *Star* or *Republican,* once in a while you can send them (you can send two for a 1 c. stamp) I don't mind their being a little old — I see the *Chronicle* and *Capital* at the reading room — I am feeling full as well as usual to-day, and think of going out and across the ferry — it is so pleasant this afternoon. *Friday afternoon* — I went out yesterday afternoon — across to Philadelphia, and up to the Mercantile Library Reading Room, I have spoken of. Yesterday, and yesterday evening I felt better than usual — but am not so well to-day — the worst of my case is these *fall backs* — But I have been out a little to-day. My walking does not improve any at all. (Then to make things more *cheerful,* there are many deaths here about from paralysis.) I quite miss poor Tom Osler. I am in the habit of sitting of the forenoon* by the first floor window, reading the papers and Tom would often stop a few minutes and talk to me at the window, on his way to and from the depot — He would never come in the house, but seemed to like to stop and talk that way with me. My boy that had his eye hurt is doing

* So in MS.

rather badly too. About myself, my *general strength* not only holds out, but I think rather improves, which helps a good deal. Your postal card came — also a letter from Eldridge enclosing the key. Good bye for this time, my loving boy. WALT.

XVIII

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. J., Oct. 24 [1873], *Friday afternoon.* DEAR SON PETE. I am still doing as well as when I last wrote — I have many alternations, but upon the whole I have no reason to complain of the last ten days. My head has some bad spells, and a touch or more nearly every day, and my locomotion is still as clumsy as ever — but for all that I am happy in not having any of those spasms of three weeks since, and indeed I have glimpses again of my real self — have had two or three such, of an hour or two each — which I felt very encouraging. Your letter came Tuesday, and I wrote you a few lines on a postal card, which I suppose you received next day. I went to Tommy Osler's, the young R. R. man's, funeral last Sunday — it was near here — poor fellow, he used always to stop a minute at the window and talk off-hand and cheerful — Pete, he often made me think of you, dear son — he was your age and size — he was an only son. I go out now about every day, my strength is certainly improving — shall go out this afternoon. About one hour ago the big Adams Ex-

press wagon drove up to the door, with a box for me — it was 2 doz. 2 lb. cans of fresh Oregon salmon from St. Louis, from my brother Jeff — I am very fond of it for breakfast, can eat it every day — (my appetite is pretty fair, but I must have just the things I want, can't eat any others) — Pete, your description of the old Evangelical alliances fellows, as if they had just walked out of Noah's ark, made me laugh heartily — you just hit it — I have just got a long letter from Mrs. O'Connor — she is in Massachusetts — returns to Washington in November — How are Mr. and Mrs. Nash, and Ed, and all? — give them my love — tell Ed. I shall yet want him to build me *that small house* — I send my love to Wash Milburn — I am writing this up in my room, 3 o'clock, pleasant weather, sun shining, window open — I am feeling quite fair to-day. Good bye for this time, my loving boy. WALT.

XIX

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. J., Friday afternoon, Oct. 31 [1873.] DEAR BOY PETE. My condition remains about the same — I don't get ahead any to notice — but I hold my own, as favorable as I have stated in my late letters, and am free yet from the very confused spells of the head and spasms of three weeks ago. Besides I think upon the whole, my general strength is the best it has been yet — for an interval every now and then it

certainly is. All very encouraging — (But my disease seems to have such ups and downs I have learned to fear to make calculations, almost.) The weather here is fine — cool mornings and nights, indeed quite cold at times — but the bulk of the day perfect — I think the cool weather season is beneficial to me. I am sitting here writing this with one of the windows wide open, and the afternoon sun streaming in. I got a letter this morning from Mr. Eldridge that he had paid Godey, my substitute, the money I sent out for his October pay — Washington must be looking pleasant this fall. Write me how you are fixed, and I like to hear all the particulars about your work on the R. R. Good-bye for this time, my loving boy. WALT. It is now a little after 2 — I have had my dinner, beefsteak and potatoes — pumpkin pie and a cup of tea — Don't you think that is doing very well? — It is a glorious afternoon and I am going down to take a trip once or twice across the Delaware in the ferry boat. It makes a pleasant little trip, as the river here is most as wide as the Potomac from 7th St. wharf — has two little islands in the middle, which sometimes we steer between, and sometimes go round — Then *these nights,* Pete — last night I was out, came home about 8 — the moon shining bright as silver — I thought of our old walks, dear son.

XX

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, Sunday afternoon, Nov. 9 [1873]. DEAR SON PETE. By accident your usual letter was not sent to P. O. so that you could get it Saturday — which may have made you some uneasy — but you need not be, as I still continue to hold my own, full as good as at previous advices — I still remain clear of any of those real bad spells of the head. — I cannot walk any better yet — but otherwise am getting along very favorably — I received your postal card acknowledging the *10. I get out every fair day — shall go out about 4 to visit a family here, Col. Johnston, the jolliest man I ever met, an artist, a great talker, but real, natural first-rate off-hand cheerfulness and comical-sensible talk, a man of good information too, travelled in Europe — an hour or two does me real good — he has a wife, daughter, and son, all good — I go Sunday evenings to tea — Pete, I send you a paper with a piece in about Richmond affairs, manufactures, etc., I thought you might like to look over — Here there is great talk of the proposed Centennial Exposition — I will send you pictures of the buildings soon. I am sitting here in my room 3rd story — We have had quite a storm — but at present the sun shines out, by spells — I am feeling quite comfortable — I would almost think of coming back to Washington — but have

* The $ omitted in MS.

learned not to make calculations *too soon* or *too sanguine*—so I shall remain here for the present—If you see Col. Hinton tell him I am getting along favorably—tell him Mr. Linton, the artist, has lately called upon me—tell Hinton to be sure and come and call on me, should he come to Philadelphia—Tell Wash Milburn, and Parker also, I send them my love, and that I shall be back to Washington this winter—tell Parker I was sorry to hear of his illness—As I write the wind is crooning and whistling around the house at a great rate—it is a music though I like to hear—That is a bad business, the shooting of Ryan and the three good fellows, in Cuba—the Spaniards will probably just keep on at their bloody tricks till the U. S. (and perhaps England) steps in and kicks them out of Cuba—which in my opinion ought to be done without delay—I suppose you knew Ryan by sight, he was around Washington so much—Well, good bye for this time, dear loving boy. WALT.

XXI

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, Friday afternoon, Nov. 14 [1873]. DEAR PETE, DEAR SON. I am sitting here in my room again writing to you—there is no particular change in the situation—we are having some pretty cold weather here—I go out a little every day, but my walking does not improve any—I had a partially bad spell yesterday

afternoon, and did not go out, but it passed over, and to-day I feel as well as I usually have lately —I shall get out this afternoon, and over to the Reading Room in Philadelphia—(Looking over the papers, I see occasionally very interesting *news* about myself—a paper in Salt Lake, Utah, had me dead—and the *Philadelphia Item,* about the same time had me at a public dinner, in Philadelphia, making a speech.) I received your last. I suppose you got mine last Tuesday—I have just had my dinner, bean soup, boiled beef, and pumpkin pie, all good—so you see I might be doing worse —It is now just after 2, and I am feeling quite comfortable—and hope this will find you all right, my loving boy—WALT.

XXII

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. J., Friday afternoon, Nov. 21 [1873]. DEAR SON PETE. Nothing very new with me—I continue about the same —my general strength the best it has been yet—I go out a little most every day, but it is very cold weather here—I was quite nonplus'd at that affair in Bergazzi's with Frank Rives—who is he? Is he some one I know?—was he drunk or loony? tell me more of it—what he said—the exact words— It seems unaccountable to me—from what I gather from your letter you did exactly right. If I had n't met with some queer characters myself—and been

the subject of such strange and unaccountable remarks — I should hardly think anything of the sort possible. I have occupied myself lately writing — have sent a letter to the *Graphic* describing the Capitol, which they have accepted, and may publish Saturday or Monday. Have also written a poem which I have sold — will send you one when it appears. — As I write this holding the paper on my lap, I am sitting here in the parlor by the heater — have had my dinner — drank quite a goblet of wine, which I believe has flown into my head. (My brother West and another friend here, have both sent me presents of good wine — and I drink it occasionally, half water — but this time I have taken a little extra) — Pete, I thought I would send you a couple of shirts — so I have ordered them made here, got as near the measure as I could — they will be done in some ten days, perhaps less, and then I will send them. I like mine so well, I have had yours made like them, with collars on. I have had no new togs made this winter. I wear my old gray suit, and the old black overcoat — and when very cold or stormy my gray shawl — If you could see me now leaning against Milburn's counter, you would n't *see any difference from last winter* — (but my heart tells a different story) — I have been in all day, and must get out a little — the evenings are the most tedious with me — I can manage to put in *the days,* but these long *cold evenings.* I

think if I only had the right quarters in Washington, *my own quarters and a good wood fire, and you with me as* often as possible, I should be comparatively happy. WALT.

XXIII

431 Stevens St. cor. West. Camden, N. J., Friday [*Nov.*] *28th* [1873], *2 p.m.* DEAR SON PETE. Here I sit again by the heater in the parlor, writing my weekly letter — I have just had my dinner, some cold turkey and a glass of Missouri wine, etc. Had been out to the P. O. some five or six squares distant — but have to take my time — Am still getting along very satisfactorily (for I am now satisfied with things not being *very* bad with me) — and my strength is undoubtedly better, which I hope will in time bring improvement in my walking, and in my head, etc. etc.—The letter you spoke of about Penn. Av. in the paper was not by me* — In the *Graphic* of Tuesday last, Nov. 25, they print a portrait of my beautiful phiz, and a criticism on my books, one of the best and friendliest I have seen yet — if you can get one in Washington you will like it — if not you may see it at *Graphic* office in Washington — I have not received any — Also Monday's Nov. 24 *Graphic* prints my letter about the Capitol — Your letter came Tuesday — as I said before you seem to have done what was

* *I. e.*, Was not written by me.

unavoidable in the Rives muss — but I have a horror of bar-room fracases and fights — and I know you have too — As a general thing, I don't think it necessary to resent the insults of drunkards or fools, — (unless there is something unavoidable in the case) — Did you get the *Scottish Chiefs* I sent? Good bye, my dear, loving boy — I am doing quite well — I hope this will find you feeling well in health and jolly in spirits. WALT. Pete, I will probably send the shirts early next week by Express.

XXIV

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, Dec. 5 [1873], *after* 12 M. DEAR PETE. I am still holding on about the same — it is pretty certain I don't get behindhand, and that 's about the best I can say — continue to get out a little every day when the weather will permit — but my walking power is still very bad indeed — Pete, I sent the shirts this morning by Adams express — they are enveloped in a flat paper box about 2 feet long by 1 wide — I hope they will get there Saturday — (but possibly may not reach you till Monday) — (you must pay the freight there) I hope they will fit — the blue one, it was n't done till last night, is to wear over — I got the stuff, it is first rate Middlesex flannel, cost $5. (same as my summer shirts are made of) — is not intended to be washed often — but can be when

necessary — must then be washed by some one experienced in washing nice flannels — I sent *Graphic* with my portrait — (as they sent me some) also my Capitol letter — I received your good letter last Tuesday. Dear son, I send you $10 for your Christmas present — perhaps you will need a pair of winter boots, (or some good cotton flannel for underclothes — or something) — I received a good letter from Mr. Eldridge — Mrs. O'Connor was to come home last Tuesday — I sent a paper to Parker Milburn with my portrait — also to Charley Towner — I hope you carried yours up to Mr. Nash, as I know it would interest and amuse him and Mrs. Nash — give them both my love — (I see just a line in the paper that Mr. Nash had given some reminiscences at a meeting of the oldest inhabitants) — I see the B. and P. R. R. had a bad freight car accident last Wednesday night at Patapsco, but no injury to human life or limb — I have not been quite so well in the head yesterday and to-day — but am around as usual, as it is nothing very heavy — We are having a mild spell here, this is the third day, with partial rain and fog — It is now just after 1 — I am sitting here writing this in the parlor by the heater — my dinner is about ready, and I am going — Everything is very complete and correct here — but O, I need your dear loving face and hand and voice.— Your old WALT.

XXV

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. J., Dec. 12 [1873]. Dear boy Pete. I felt bad enough to hear of the death of Bill Burns — and in such a sudden cruel way, — poor young man — he has had a reckless unsatisfactory life — many deficiencies and very shiftless — all of which I understood perfectly well — but I had an affection for him after all — Have I not heard that he had a wife and child? which (if so) he has left — but was parted from quite a while ago — Pete, so your shirts came all safe, and they fit you, do they? — good — The blue shirt (did I write?) is to wear *over,* loose — it is made large for that purpose — I like the looks of them, the blue shirt collar turned down low with a nice black silk neck handkerchief, tied loose — over a clean white shirt without necktie — I think they are very becoming to young working men — I sent 3 *Graphics* to Mr. and Mrs. Nash — when you hear, tell me if they came safe — I send you some papers to-day — There is nothing new with me, or my condition — my principal malady is about the same (no worse) — but I have had for three or four days a wretched cold in the head, sore throat, most lost my voice for two days — everything bad enough — am better rather to-day, begin to speak so I can be understood — shall be all right soon — As I write it is now between 11 and 12 a.m. Friday — it is very mild,

sunshiny forenoon — I am sitting here in the parlor — looks south, looks down a pleasant street, West Street, full view, makes quite a nice view for me to sit and look out — the letter carrier comes around in about an hour from now, and takes my letters to P. O. — I have become sort of acquainted with most of the carriers, ferry men, car conductors and drivers, etc. etc., they are very good indeed — help me on and off the cars, here and in Philadelphia — they are nearly all young fellows — it all helps along — Well Pete, dear loving boy, I will bid you good bye for this week. WALT.

XXVI

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. J., 12 M., *Friday, Dec. 19* [1873]. DEAR BOY PETE. Well, I am sitting here in the parlor again writing my weekly letter — as I write the rain is pouring and it is a thick and dark day enough — I am feeling pretty bad, but it seems to be mostly from a severe cold in the head — any how I am having one of my bad spells, of which I have gone through so many — had a bad night last night — but have eat my breakfast this morning, and have no doubt I shall feel better before many days. Pete, I received your letter and the *Herald* last Monday all right. Did Mr. and Mrs. Nash get the 3 *Graphics* I sent them? — I have been out most every day the past week, and have been across the river to Philadelphia — It has been a very

pleasant week, and I have enjoyed sailing across the Delaware, and the splendid sunsets most every evening — it is my greatest enjoyment — Pete, all you write about folks and things in Washington is interesting to me — it will be read, everything you scratch down, as I sit here a great deal of the time (and time is dull and lonesome at the best) — My pieces I have written (I believe I mentioned about it) have not yet appeared in the Magazine — but the money has been paid me for them, and they are in type, and I have read the proofs — will either send them to you, when printed, or send you word, so you can get them yourself — Did I send you both my letters about the Capitol in the *Graphic?* — I believe I did, but if not I can yet — I send you to-day's Philadelphia *Press* — nothing special in it — Well, good bye for this time, dear loving boy. WALT. Pete, how about running on here to see me for a day or two? — Could n't you come, convenient, say latter part of next week? If you can, I will fix the time.

XXVII

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. J., Dec. 26 — Noon [1873]. DEAR BOY PETE. I have been looking for you the last two days and nights — but I have about given you up now. I have been kept in pretty close, as we have had real winter here, snow and bad weather, and bad walking — I have

been quite alone, as my brother and sister went off to Delaware on Wednesday on a Christmas visit, to return to-morrow Saturday — I am about the same — my strength still keeps quite encouraging — I think is better than any time yet — my walking no better, and still a good deal of distress in the head — but as I said in my letter of Monday last, (did you get it Tuesday?) — I somehow feel a little more like myself than any time since I was taken down — Your last letter was quite a treat — so much about Washington, and folks, one thing and another — As I write I sit here in the parlor — we have had an awful time from the fire going out in the heater, and making it up again — there is so much complicated machinery about one of these heaters with all the late improvements — give me my old stove and wood fire yet — It is snowing by fits here this morning. WALT.

A GLIMPSE through an interstice caught,
Of a crowd of workmen and drivers in a bar-room around the stove late of a winter night, and I unremark'd seated in a corner,
Of a youth who loves me and whom I love, silently approaching and seating himself near, that he may hold me by the hand,
A long while amid the noises of coming and going, of drinking and oath and smutty jest,
There we two, content, happy in being together, speaking little, perhaps not a word.

Leaves of Grass (Ed'n 1892), p. 109.

Letters of 1874

I

431 Stevens St. cor West, Camden, N. J. Jan. 2, 12 M. [1874]. DEAR BOY. I am about the same —consider myself improving, if anything, though slowly enough — Pete, I will get you the Dictionary, I will see about it soon. You spoke about the post of baggage master on the through New York train —and the appointment being in Philadelphia. Who appoints them? Tell me more fully about it in your next. I got your last letter, and several papers. To-day I have received a letter from Charles Eldridge — we have had a long rainy and dark time here, but mild — no snow on the ground now — I go out — As I write, the trains are going by, about 400 feet off, ringing and smoking — there are 20 a day in full view from here. WALT. I send you a picture for your New Year's.

II

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, Jan. 9 [1874]. WELL PETE, MY DEAR LOVING BOY. I have just come

in from a 15 minutes' walk outside, with my little dog—it is now ½ past 1 Friday afternoon—the bright sun shining, and the air and everything as pleasant as one could wish — (after most a week of rainy, dark and disagreeable but warmish weather) — I have the same old story to tell, — and thankful enough to have nothing worse to communicate — it is probable I am really slowly gaining — though I have occasional bad spells yet. Your letter was received — I was thinking whether something could not be done about getting the position of through baggage master — and feel inclined to try for you — (you know there is nothing of that sort done without trying) — Did you get the story *Rolling Stone* I sent by P. O.? — I have had a visitor from New York this forenoon — an old acquaintance, a printer and foreman, I knew 20 years ago, very sickly and expecting to die, at that time — *now* quite lively and well, really jolly and magnetic, and good company, and a good fellow, (like Parker Milburn) — I have an occasional visitor, but not many — Pete, if you see anybody coming to Philadelphia you think I would like to see, give 'em my address — I am glad to see most any one for a change — Your old WALT.

III

431 Stevens St. cor. West. Camden, N. J., Friday forenoon 11½ [16*th Jan.* 1874]. Well, son, how do

you make out this cold weather? for I suppose you are having it there as we are here — we had quite a snow storm here three or four nights ago, and since then it has cleared off bitter cold—(thermometer at 10 above an hour ago, at our west door) — Still I go out some, though very stiff — and lately some spells in my head rather bad and queer, what I have said in former letters about my general strength still holds good — otherwise I am in a bad way yet, and don't consider myself out of the woods, have not been so well as usual the last week. If you come across the *Weekly Graphic* just out get it, as I have commenced a series of pieces about things just before and during the war. The series is to continue through four or five numbers. Get one for Mr. and Mrs. Nash — Pete, I received the *Golden Grain* — also the letter, *Herald* and *Repub.* — send me one of the latter, occasionally — I had rather have it than any — (but you need n't put yourself out to get it) — As I write the sun is shining bright and clear as can be — the ground is white with snow in all directions, it is not melting anywhere — as I crossed the river yesterday toward dusk, the old fellow, the chargè* of the ferry house, told me that between 12 and 2 o'clock the previous night over 30 persons crowded in there, poor houseless creatures, to keep from freezing to death — he keeps a great stove red hot

* Intended for chargé.

all night — some were young, some old, some evidently real respectable people — the orders are to not allow it, but he had n't the heart to turn 'em out — God help the homeless and moneyless this weather. WALT.

IV

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, Jan. 19, Monday noon [1874]. DEAR LOVING SON. I received your letter this forenoon. Pete, I thought I would send you a little change enclosed — all I have by me to-day — (but I have plenty at my command) — It is wet and foggy to-day, and a glaze of ice everywhere — so I am compelled to remain in. I am feeling decidedly better the last 24 hours — am surely getting through the winter very well — guess I shall come out with the frogs and lilacs in the spring — I keep a bully good heart, take it altogether —and you must too my darling boy. WALT.

V

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey; Friday, 1½ P.M. [*Jan. 23rd,* 1874]. DEAR BOY PETE. Your letter came Wednesday — you must try to cultivate and keep up a gay and cheerful heart, and shed off botherations, and the impositions of employers, etc., as a duck sheds water in a rain storm — that 's the best capital a fellow can have through his whole life, I find. I am only so-so — had a very

bad night last night — it 's a tough pull Pete — still I think I shall come out of it. We are having it very mild here now — after snow and cold the first of the week — too mild, like April to-day, cloudy and some rain. I keep myself some busy writing* — have a piece in *Harper's Monthly* just out (February) — shall have another in the March number — Can't seem to do without occupying my mind through the day — nights are worst for me—I can't rest well — has been so now for a month — But I must not fill my letter with my complaints — To-day is just a year since I was paralyzed (23rd Jan. '73) — What a year it has been to me — Good bye, my loving boy — write me all the news and gossip. WALT.

VI

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, Friday afternoon, Jan. 30, 2 o'clock [1874]. DEAR PETE. I am having another of my bad spells to-day — but it will pass over — I have had a pretty good time most of the week till last night — thought I was getting decidedly better — (and guess I am yet, and that this will pass over). Everything goes on the same with me here. As I write this I am sitting here alone as usual in the parlor by the heater — I have just been out, but it was so chilly and raw I did n't venture off the block, but came back in 5 or 6 minutes — the air feels like snow.

* *I. e.*, I keep writing more or less.

The trains of the Camden and Amboy are going by on the track about 50 or 60 rods from here, puffing and blowing — often train after train, following each other — and locomotives singly, whisking and squealing, up the track and then down again — I often sit here and watch them long — and think of you. I think I shall try again to get out, evening*—sometimes it makes me feel better, after I get out in the open air, and move around a little. 7.15 *evening, Friday* — I am writing this over in the Mercantile Library, 10th St., Philadelphia — I have felt better since 4 o'clock and have come out and crossed the river, and taken quite a ride up Market St. 2 miles in the Market St. cars. The cars are very nice, old style, cushioned, fare 7 cents — if you get a transfer you have to pay extra — the working hours are from 16½ to 18 — they have the new alarm punch, every fare or ticket, rings a little bell every time you punch — I suppose you have seen it — they say it is quite a success, and they are introducing them in other cities — but it will get played out — Pete write how you are getting along — and all about the folks, every one I know — I am feeling as well as usual, as I finish this letter — Good bye for this time my loving son. — WALT. Don't you get discouraged at work, or on the road — I feel that we shall yet be together, and have good times, just being with each other, no matter how poor.

* In the evening.

VII

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, Friday noon, Feb. 6 [1874]. DEAR BOY PETE. Both your letters came this week — also one from my friend Eldridge, he too speaks of meeting and talking with you. It is real winter here, the ground all covered with snow, as I look out — not the least thaw to-day, as it is cloudy — I rise pretty late mornings — had my breakfast a little while ago, mutton-chop, coffee, nice brown bread and sweet butter, very nice — eat with very fair appetite — I enjoy my breakfast better than any other meal — (eat a light dinner pretty late, and no supper) — Feel generally about the same as before described — no worse no better, (nothing to brag of anyhow). I have mentioned about my crossing the ferry — from our house the cars run by the next corner (200 feet or less), a half mile or so to the ferry — the Delaware here is full three quarters of a mile wide — it is a noble river, not so wide as the Potomac nor with fine banks like Arlington, but grander, and with more style, and with powerful rushing tides, now great processions of broken ice, many little and some great big cakes — the boats are very fine and strong, go crashing right ahead, with a loud noise, breaking the cakes often a foot thick and more — I enjoy crossing these days — it does me good — the ferry men are all very kind and respectful — I have been reading a book *Merrie England in the Olden*

Time, a London book, with pictures, full of fun and humor — I have enjoyed it much — There is an awful amount of want and suffering from no work, here about — a young man was here yesterday — had seen me in Washington — wanted help — I gave him a little — I see the cars and locomotives skurrying by as I close. WALT.

VIII

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden N. Jersey, Feb. 13, 2½ P.M. [1874]. DEAR PETE. Here I am yet in my big chair in the parlor — I am up and around, but not very well — I am having a return, (though not so severe,) of those old *blurs* that used to trouble me — have had a succession of them all day to-day so far — begun yesterday — but I have no doubt they will pass over. It is cloudy and sulky here to-day, partially thawing — and is raining now — I have been out, managed to walk around the block, but had to return — did not feel well. Pete, there is nothing new — I got your last letter — have received letters from Mrs. O'Connor — I have no doubt I shall feel better — my sickness comes and goes and my relief spells the same — I shall probably have to stay in the rest of the day and evening, which is very dull and stupid for me — in fact quite dismal — But I must not write what will make you blue, would rather cheer you up — I am still continuing the pieces in the *Weekly Graphic* (will be

ended with one or two more) — expect to have a piece in next *Harper* (March), but am not certain.— Just as I close the carrier has tapped at the window — he brings me a letter from Boston, and in it a check, paying a debt due me a long time, and which I had quite given up — which puts me in better spirits — good bye for present my dear, loving son — your WALT.

IX

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, Friday afternoon, 2½ [*Feb.* 20, 1874.] DEAR BOY PETE. Well, Pete, dear son, I have just had my dinner (stewed chicken and onions — good) and here I sit again in the same old chair, in the parlor, writing my weekly screed to you — Nothing to brag of this week — have passed a disagreeable week — mainly I suppose from a bad, bad cold in the head — have suffered badly from it, every way — but keep up and around — and shall get through with it, when the time comes — Have not written any for publication the past fortnight — have not felt at all like writing — My *Weekly Graphic* pieces are about concluded — (the next week's, the 6th number, ends them — I am just reading the last proof to-day) — I have a poem in the March *Harper* * — as I believe I mentioned in my last (I am told that I have colored it with thoughts of myself — very likely) —

* "The Prayer of Columbus."

Pete, I received your letter last Monday — and *Herald* — I have not sent you any papers or books lately — but will, again — As I sit here, concluding this, I am feeling quite comfortable. Take care of yourself, my darling boy — your old WALT, as always. Pete, as I am a little in extra funds to-day I enclose you $5.—thinking (like Mrs. Toodle's coffin) it "might perhaps come in use sometime."

X

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, Feb. 27 [1874]. DEAR SON. Nothing very different or new with me — I have had rather a hard week (continued from the former one) — but still I don't get *flat* — am often thankful to be as well as I am — I received your letter and paper.— We too have had the same snow storm I see you have had in Washington — it is bright and sunny to-day here, though middling cool — I am sitting here in the parlor alone — it is about 10 — I have had my breakfast — I amuse myself by seeing the locomotives and trains go by — I see them very plainly out of the back window — they are only 7 or 800 feet off — they go by constantly — often one right after another — I have got used to them and like them — Did you see my last pieces in the *Weekly Graphic?* (the sixth paper, just out, is the last) — I sent you a couple of Philadelphia papers yesterday — I was glad you wrote me about Wash Peddrick — I have not heard from

him in a long time — (he did me a good turn once in the office, just out of good will, and I shall never forget it) — Pete, write whoever you see, and about anything in Washington — I met a young man here from Washington last night, Wm. Colein, an engineer in the fire room Treasury* — Love to Mr. and Mrs. Nash — and to Parker and Wash Milburn — and in short to all my friends — your old WALT.

XI

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, March 6 [1874]. DEAR BOY PETE. I was quite shocked to hear of Parker Milburn's death — he was never very rugged, but he kept up so well, and always had some cheerful, lively thought or saying — I was far from anticipating this — I think he had very noble traits, and both you and I liked him thoroughly — Pete, I hope he is better off — I will try to write a few words to Wash — Pete I have received both your letters — I go out often in the Market St. cars past the West Philadelphia depot you speak of, but never get out or go in there, as it is a great depot, full of hurrying people, and hacks and drivers, and trains coming and going continually and people rushing and crowding — too much excitement for me — So you saw Colein, in the Treasury — I saw him only a few minutes in a street car, but he could give you some report of me from his own eyes,

*I. e., in the fire room of the Treasury Building.

and that I know satisfied you better — I am feeling quite an improvement, or let up, the last two days and nights on the bad spell I spoke of in my last letters — have slept better the last two nights. To-day as I write here, it is cloudy and feels a little like snow coming — it has been very mild here too — Pete, go up sometime when you start out early in the afternoon and see Mrs. O'Connor, 1015 O Street near 11th — she will be very glad to see you. I hope you won't fail to go. I am feeling quite comfortable to-day as I write. Pete, I sometimes think if I was fixed so that I had you with me every day I should get well — good bye for this week, my loving son — from your old WALT.

XII

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, Thursday, 5½ P.M. [*March 12,* 1874]. DEAR BOY PETE. I have been in all day, I don't think I ever knew such long continued gales of wind — this is now the fourth or fifth day—night and day — and as I write it is howling and whirling just as bad as ever — I have n't been out any to speak of for three days — the gales are too much for me. My spell of let up and feeling more comfortable continues, with some interruptions — night before last, and for some time yesterday I was in a bad way again — but had a good night's rest last night, and am comfortable to-day—I think I am decidedly more

improving than going behind hand — I have thought frequently of Parker Milburn — all his ways and his good points come up in my mind — and now the news comes of the sudden death of Mr. Sumner — Your letter came Monday and the *Herald.* — *Friday, March 13, 12* M. Not very well to-day — To add to my troubles a very bad cold in the head and all over me, again — this is the third attack this winter — but enough of grunting — The papers are filled with Sumner's* death, funeral, life, etc. The cold, dry gale continues here. I get letters from Mrs. O'Connor. Don't fail to go up and make her a call, when convenient. You remember Arnold Johnson that used to live over on the hill by the Insane Asylum — well he has come back to Washington, and is Chief Clerk again Light House Board, and Wm. O'Connor has changed to a clerkship in the Library Treasury.† I am sitting here alone in the same old seat in the parlor writing. Good bye for this time dear boy. WALT.

XIII

431 Stevens St., Camden, March 20, 4½ P.M. [1874]. DEAR BOY PETE. Nothing particular or new in my condition — I have been to the Doctor's to-day — had quite a long interview — no great satisfaction — I still have pretty uncomfortable times —

* Charles Sumner, anti-slavery statesman and United States Senator from Massachusetts, b. at Boston 1811, d. 1874.

† The library of the Treasury Department (?)

and yet I keep up good heart in the main. I will make out only a short letter this time, I see. Good bye my loving son, I will try to do better next week. WALT.

XIV

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, [*March 26, 1874*] *Thursday afternoon* 2½. I have just had my dinner — roast beef, lima beans, graham bread and sweet butter, with a cup of tea, and some stewed cranberries — I eat quite a good dinner, and enjoyed it all. I still consider myself getting along very well. O, if this only holds out, and keeps on favorably, even if ever so moderate and slow — But I seem to have so many of these gleams that delude me into thinking I am on the way to recovery, but soon cloud over again, and let me back as bad as ever — But every time I feel pretty easy, I still keep thinking, *now* I am *certainly* going to get much better this time. Pete, your short letter came to-day, written on the cars — dear son, come whenever you can. As I said on my postal card, if you were here this week, you would find me more like myself, (with the exception of walking) than I have been for fourteen months — whether it will continue or not, God only knows — but we will hope for the best. As I sit here writing to you to-day, it appears to me every way hopeful, and likely that we shall yet have good times. Everything is quiet, rather

lonesome. My little dog is stretched out on the rug at full length, snoozing. He hardly lets me go a step without being close at my heels — follows me in my slow walks, and stops or turns just as I do. We have had a most windy blustering March, but it is pleasanter and milder yesterday and to-day — (I saw the new moon over my right shoulder a week ago,—of *course* a *sure* sign of good luck) — Will finish this letter and send it to-morrow. *Friday, March 27, noon.* Pleasant and bright weather — have been out on the sidewalk in front, once or twice, with my shawl around me — walk slow and quite feeble — have some spells of bad headache — Went by the West Philadelphia depot yesterday afternoon, in the Market Street horse cars — saw plenty of R. R. men and conductors about the place, lounging and waiting their time —thought if I could only see you among them — as I sit here writing I can see the trains of the Camden and Amboy, in full view, some 40 or 50 rods off — makes it quite lively — As I write, I am feeling pretty comfortable, and am going out awhile after I finish this — but had a bad night last night. Hope this will find you all right — good bye for this time, dear son. WALT.

XV

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, April 10, 12 M. [1874]. DEAR PETE. Nothing very new or different in my condition, or anything else —

have hardly been doing as well since I last wrote, as before — but still hope to pull up.—Received your letter last Monday, and the *Herald.* Not much of a letter this time, my loving boy — as I don't seem to be able to write much — though, as I sit here, I am not feeling any worse than usual. Ashton has lost his little child: died last Thursday. I have just received two letters from Mrs. O'Connor. How does all go with you? Pete, darling, shan't I send you a little money? WALT.

XVI

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, April 16, 1 P.M. [1874]. DEAR SON. I send you a letter a day ahead this week — Nothing new with me — received the letter of last Sunday — also the *Capital* and the *Herald* — I had a day or two's visit, very acceptable, from John Burroughs last Saturday and Sunday — he has built a house on the Hudson River about 80 miles from N. Y.—has a little farm there, 9 or 10 acres, very nice — As I write I am feeling comfortable (but every day and every night seems to bring its bad spell, or several of them) — Somehow I still feel that I shall come round, and that we shall be together and have some good times again—but I don't know. Your WALT.

XVII

431 Stevens St., Camden, N. Jersey, May 1, 2 P.M. [1874]. DEAR PETE. I have been out halting around

for a walk, as it is quite pleasant to-day — But I believe I have overdone the matter, as I have a pretty bad feeling the last hour or two both in the head and left side, and as I sit here writing. So your limited express seems to be a real success — if it keeps up as well as it has begun I have no doubt it will increase, and be patronized, and become a permanent institution — (I had got the idea, somehow, at first that the same crew went through from Washington to New York, and so was some in hopes of seeing you in Philadelphia) — No change in my condition or prospects — the young man, Walter Godey, still works as my substitute in the Solicitor's office — I have n't had any word from Eldridge in two months, nor from Mrs. O'Connor in some time — (have you been up there?) — Do you see Hinton or Tasistro? — My sister has just called me to my dinner — so I will close for this time. Your old WALT.

XVIII

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, May 22, 3¼ P.M. [1874]. DEAR PETE. I hope you will be able to come, as you said in your last — If I knew when and where you would arrive in Philadelphia, I would try to meet you — As I wrote you before, you must come to Market St. ferry, Philadelphia, a mile and a half or 2 miles from R. R. depot, and cross over by boat to Federal St., Cam-

den — (The Philadelphia horse cars run Sundays — run down to the foot of Market St. — but the Camden ones do not — but it is not very far from the ferry in Camden). I am very much the same — my being disabled and want of exercise for 16 months (and many other wants too) have saddled me with serious dyspepsia and what the doctor calls gastric catarrh, very obstinate, causing me really more suffering and pain than my paralysis — but though I have bad spells enough, thank God I also have middling good ones — and as I write this have just had my dinner, nice salt oysters, raw, fresh, and am feeling quite comfortable — Dear son, I shall look for you. WALT.

XIX

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, June 25 [1874]. DEAR BOY PETE. I have weathered it out pretty well this week — at present moment I am sitting here cover'd with sweat, with nothing on but shirt and pants — to-day and yesterday the very hottest kind — I suppose you have it too. — Pete, there is nothing new in my case, and no prospect more than usual of anything *sudden* — but it seems pretty clear that there is no substantial recovery probable (hardly possible) for me — how long it will last this way it is of course impossible to tell — I take it all without growling — things are steadily growing worse with me — But I must not worry

you — and maybe there is something more favorable ahead — I busy myself a little every day writing — I want to fix my books in a little better shape, this summer — partly busy with a new volume — so that they will all be comprised in two volumes — (not very much really new matter, but some) — So you don't come on to Baltimore now (as I take it from your last) — Love to you, dear son. WALT. Love to Mr. and Mrs. Nash — Do you ever see Mrs. O'Connor or Eldridge? — Is Tasistro still around?

XX

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, July 10 [1874]. DEAR, DEAR SON. I am still here suffering pretty badly — have great distress in my head, and an almost steady pain in left side — but my worst troubles let up on me part of the time — the evenings are my best times — and somehow I still keep up in spirit, and (the same old story) *expect* to get better. I have been discharged from my clerkship in the solicitor's office, Treasury, by the new Solicitor, Mr. Wilson. I think of laying up here in Camden, I have bought a cheap lot — and think of putting up a little two or three room house for myself, my darling son, you must not be unhappy about me — I hope and trust things may work so that we can yet be with each other, at least from time to time — and meanwhile we must adapt

ourselves to circumstances. You keep on and try to do right, and live the same square life you always have, and maintain as cheerful a heart as possible, and as for the way things finally turn out, leave that to the Almighty — Pete, I shall want you or Mr. Eldridge to see to the sending on here of my boxes at Dr. White's — I will write further about it — I have not heard anything from Eldridge, or Mrs. O'Connor, or any of the Washington folk for quite a long time. Have you been up to see Mrs. O'C.? Pete, did n't you get my last Saturday's postal card? I wrote you one, I got yours last Monday — Did you get the Camden paper with my College piece in? I sent one. Very hot here yesterday and to-day. I don't fret at all about being discharged — it is just as well — I wonder it did n't come before — How are your folks at home? — your dear mother and all — write about all and Mr. and Mrs. Nash, Wash Milburn, and the R. R. boys. Your old WALT.

XXI

431 Stevens St., Camden, Aug. 28 [1874]. DEAR PETE. Nothing very new with me — rather a mixed week — some suffering — Pete, if you have a decided wish to go on the Pullman car, and are pretty clear that it would be a good move, I will let you have $100. Good bye for this time, dear son.

Your WALT.

XXII

Camden Friday afternoon [*Aug.* 29, 1874]. DEAR PETE. I still remain about the same, and with nothing to write about in the way of my improvement, or anything else — but I thought you would want to have word. Your letter of last Sunday came all right. The paper has also come. I am no worse — and continue to live on hope — fortunately I have been stocked with a good plentiful share of it. It is pleasant weather here, though hot — we have frequent rains — we have had one to-day, about an hour ago, but now it is very bright and pleasant — I am going to try to get out a little — So good bye for this time, dear son—I hope to write more of a letter next time. WALT.

XXIII

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. J., Oct. 13 [1874]. DEAR PETE. I want some things taken out of my trunk, and put in a bundle and sent here by express. I have written to-day to Mr. Eldridge and sent him the key. I have asked him to go into Milburn's between 3.30 and 4 this afternoon, and meet you—or if not convenient for you this afternoon, to-morrow or next will do just as well, as I am in no hurry — you both go up in my room and get them — I want my old gray suit, coat, vest, and (I think there are two pair of pants) my old black overcoat that is laid away in the trunk. Black felt hat — (the smallest

lightest one). The old buckskin gloves. I think some big sheets of very stout wrapping paper, and plenty of stout cord will do — the directions must be very plain and in two places — If not convenient to go to-day, go to-morrow afternoon, or next. I don't want the freight paid, as I will pay it on delivery here. I enclose a dollar as there may be some expense (some little fixings). Pete, I received your letter this morning, and it was very welcome, as always. I received the *Sunday Herald* too. I am having a good spell so far to-day — (if it would only continue) — The bundle will come well enough, as it is a short straight route, if you only do it up so they won't get loose, and put on plain directions.

WALT.

CAMERADO, I give you my hand!
I give you my love more precious than money,
I give you myself before preaching or law.

Leaves of Grass (Ed'n 1892), p. 129.

Letters of 1875

I

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, Friday, 2 P. M. [1875]. DEAR PETE. Nothing special to write you, about myself, or anything else, this week, your letter and the *Herald* came last Monday. The time goes very tedious with me — and yet I think I am getting better (but don't know for sure) — Still have frequent bad spells. I stopt at the W. Philadelphia depot, Market Street, two or three evenings ago, in the general passengers' room, to rest, about 10 minutes. Then took the car for Market St. ferry (a mile and a half or three quarters), and over to Camden, home — I get desperate at staying in — not a human soul for cheer, or sociability or fun, and this continued week after week and month after month — So you met Johnny Saunders in Baltimore, and he is flourishing. If you see him again, tell him to write to me — he is a young man I always loved. ½ *past 2.* I have just had a nice oyster stew for my dinner — it is blustering weather, partly clear, partly cloudy, and one or two little flirts of snow

to-day. I send you a paper or two, but nothing in them. I will try to stop in Philadelphia and find that little dictionary I promised you — So long, my loving son, your old WALT.

II

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, April 30, noon [1875]. DEAREST SON. I saw the R. R. smash the first thing in the paper in the morning, and run my eyes over the account with fear and trembling — and only on reading it over a second time was I satisfied that you were not in it — poor souls! for I suppose every one that was in it, had some who heard or read the news with pain and terror — some parent, wife, friend, or child — poor Buchanan — but I hope from accounts that he will get up again, before long without serious damage — The papers here publish full, and I guess very good accounts of the whole affair — I liked what the *Star* said so plainly — that *the cause below all others* of such accidents, is because they run such a route *over a single track* — you may remember my warning on the same point three years ago in a talk with you. Pete, the spring finds me pretty much in the same tedious and half way condition I have been lingering in now over two years — up and around every day, look not much different, and eat pretty well — but not a day passes without some bad spells, sometimes *very bad,* and

never a real good night's sleep — yet still I have a sort of feeling not to give it up yet — keep real good spirits — don't get blue, even at my worst spells — I am sitting here to-day as usual alone in the front room, by the window — feel pretty comfortable — the weather is bright and pleasant here to-day, but cool for the season, and the most backward I have ever known — My sister is going away for some ten days to-morrow or next day, and I shall be quite alone in the house — wish you could come on and pay me a visit — Would you like to have me direct any letters or papers to the American Hotel, Balt., or shall I just direct to you at Washington as usual? — love to my darling son.

WALT.

III

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, Aug. 6 [1875]. DEAR PETE, DEAR, DEAR BOY. Still here, pulling through the summer — (I think the winter is better for me) the hot sunny days are worst for me — an extra bad strange feeling every day in the head (the doctor thinks probably the result of an old sunstroke 20 years ago — now the brain liable to it again in its sensitive condition) —otherwise not much different—*bad enough though.* I still go out a little (most always feel at the best, for me, evenings, from sundown to 10). Papers, etc., came. I still keep a little at work — there is

a printing office here, where I am doing my work — they are young men of the right stripe, and very kind and considerate and respectful to me — fix every thing in type, proof, etc., just to suit me — I am leisurely preparing my new volume. Mr. Marvin, an Internal Revenue Clerk, a friend of mine, has stopt and paid me a visit on his return to Washington. Plenty of rain here — hot but pleasant to-day — What has become of Tasistro? — Pete, you have n't made that call on Mrs. O'C. yet. Come when you can, my darling boy. Your loving old comrade and father. WALT W.

IV

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, Aug. 14 [1875]. DEAR SON. I am not feeling very bright to-day — hardly capable of writing a cheerful letter — and I don't want to send you a blue one — will feel better by next time, your WALT.

V

Camden, Aug. 29 [1875]. MY DEAR SON — Your letter came all right last Monday, and the papers. Send me the *Herald* tomorrow (with one blue stamp on), you need n't mind the other Sunday papers — I send you *Harper's Magazine* for September — I am still holding my own — gain a little strength, and am certainly improving though very slowly — both head and leg are bad enough, but

general feeling is much better, most of the time — I have sent Philadelphia papers once or twice and may again — There is nothing in them, but I thought you would know I was still around — The weather here is pleasant, and cool enough, favorable to me — I get out a little every day — am going out when I finish this — Cannot write much to-day — am having a bad headache all day — still I feel in good heart. So long, Pete, dear boy. WALT.

VI

Camden, Nov. 3 [1875]. DEAR BOY. I have received your letter, and enclose the $10. for you. I am still the same — am all alone in the house to-day, as my brother has gone to New York and my sister has gone somewhere visiting to spend the day. How I wish you were here to-day.

WALT.

VII

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, Dec. 3, noon [1875]. DEAR PETE, DEAR SON. I am getting over my late bad spell—I have been very sick indeed, the feeling of death and dizziness, my head swimming a great deal of the time — turning like a wheel — with much distress in left side, keeps me awake some nights all night — the doctor says, however, these troubles, in his opinion, are from a very serious and obstinate *liver affection* — not from

head, lungs, heart — he still thinks there is nothing but what I will get the better of — (and we will trust he is a true prophet) — I wrote about like the foregoing to Mrs. O'Connor, but was too sick to repeat it to you — and that was one reason I asked you to go up there,* — I have n't been out for three weeks, but ventured out yesterday for an hour, and got along better than I expected — and shall go out, or try to, to-day as it is very pleasant — you must not be needlessly alarmed, my darling boy, for I still think I shall get, at any rate partially well and strong enough — The doctor is quite encouraging — comes every day — and I feel a good heart yet — My young fireman friend Alcott (I think I mentioned his sickness) is dead and buried, poor fellow — I send you a bit of piece of mine about him from the paper — I have some spurts of visits, and company — but very little that goes to the right spot with me — My brother George has got a horse and light wagon and takes me out now and then, I enjoy it much — but I have been too feeble lately — Altogether pretty lonesome here, but might be much worse — Love to Mr. and Mrs. Nash, and to all inquiring friends. Your old WALT.

* Had doubtless written a letter to Mrs. O'Connor and a post-card to Pete.

Letters of 1876–1880

I

Camden, N. J. [*Wednesday,*] *Dec. 13* [1876].
DEAREST PETE. I ought to have written to you before — but I believe lazy and listless fits grow stronger and frequenter on me as I get older — and then I don't do anything at all, especially just the things I ought to do. But I often, often think of you boy, and let that make it up. I certainly am feeling better this winter, more strength to hold out, walking or like, than for nearly now four years —bad enough yet, but still *decidedly better* (my loving boy, I underscore the words, for I know they will make you feel good, to hear).

I heard about the accident on the road at the time two weeks ago — and was uneasy enough until I heard definite particulars — such things seem the fortune of R. R. travel, which I sometimes think more risky than the "fortune of war," which the knowing ones know well is more chance and accident (I mean the victory in battles) than it is generalship.

Pete, I am sitting up here alone in my room 8 o'clock P.M. writing this — I am feeling quite comfortable — I stood the cold snap of the last three days very well — to-day has been moderate and nice here — Nothing new or special in my affairs — I am selling a few of my books, (the new, 2 vol., 10 dollar, edition) from time to time — mostly to English and Irish purchasers — it is quite funny how many of my books are sent for from Ireland. Love to you, dearest son. WALT.

II

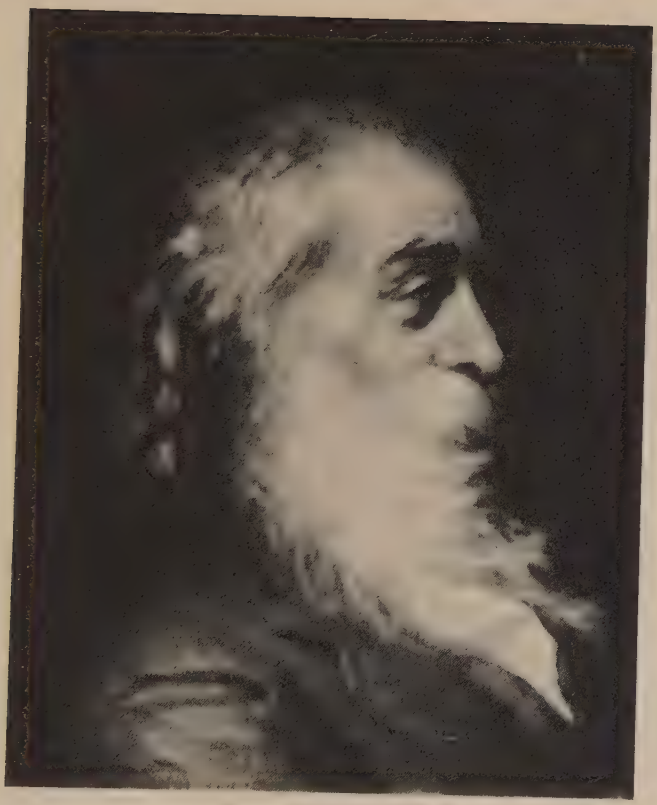
431 Stevens Street, Camden, Dec. 27, '76. DEAR SON. The money came all right, and I will keep it for the present, and use it for myself — *but only to return it at some future time when I am flush.* Nothing very new with me. I still feel pretty well, for me, (and considering the past four years). Who knows? Maybe after this winter, I shall feel well enough to come on to Washington and make out several weeks — and we'll have a good time together, my loving son, — (no more long walks to be sure — but we can be happy other ways) — Beautiful, mild, sunny, thawing afternoon to-day — I have been out a little — down to see a poor young man, an oysterman, Jim Davis, very low with consumption, took him some stewed chicken for his dinner — then went to a nice reading room and library we have here, very handy — then home to

my own dinner, stewed chicken and nice roast potatoes — and now (2½) up stairs in my room writing this, and feeling very fair — O Pete, you get that arm chair (with the broken arm) I left at Mrs. Nash's — perhaps the broken arm is still there, if so get it put on — then take the chair home for you as a New Year's present, and for your mother to sit in and you afterwards — you know I used the chair for a year, and if I recollect right, it is a good strong one, though plain — I am glad to hear what you wrote about your mother — Everything about fellows' old mothers is interesting to me — Give my love to Mr. and Mrs. Nash — your loving old WALT.

III

1929 North 22nd Street, Philadelphia, Wednesday, June 20, 1877. DEAR, DEAR BOY PETE. I am stopping here now for a week or two in the house I believe I have mentioned to you before, and where I wanted you to come and see me — (and still want you if you have a chance) but I spend most of my time down at an old farm in Jersey where I have a fine secluded wood and creek and springs, where I pass my time alone, and yet not lonesome at all (often think of you, Pete, and put my arm around you and hug you up close, and give you a good buss — often).

I am still keeping pretty well for me, have improved much, indeed quite fat, and all sun burnt



Walt Whitman, 1877
From a painting by G. W. Waters. Owned by Thomas B. Harned, Esq., Philadelphia

brick red in the face, and hands as brown as nuts — am pretty lame and paralysed yet, but walk or rather hobble sometimes half a mile and have no more (or hardly ever) of those bad, prostrated, gone in, faint spells I used to have most every day — so you see I am doing pretty well, my dear — I still make my brother's house at Camden my headquarters, and keep my room there, address my letters to Camden always.

But my sister is not well, has not been for some weeks (is soon to be confined). Upon the whole am getting along pretty well, and good spirits. The new edition of my books I sell enough of to pay my way very nicely — so I get along all right in that respect — (I don't need much) — How are they getting along at the Navy Yard? — I send them my love (I haven't forgotten the pictures, but they are a long while a-coming) — When you see Mr. Noyes tell him I should like to come on and pay him a visit this fall — And now good bye for this time, my own loving boy. Your old WALT.

IV

Kirkwood, New Jersey, Monday, July 2, 1877. DEAR BOY PETE. I still keep pretty well, and am again down here at the farm in the country, for a couple of weeks, and to stay over 4th of July. Nothing particularly new in my affairs.

As I write this (*Monday,* 10 A.M.) it is a beautiful

bright breezy forenoon — and I am going now down to the creek and spring to take a bath — it is about 90 rods distant and I walk there and back. Love, love, love. Your old WALT. I still make my headquarters in Camden.

V

431 Stevens St., Camden, Sunday, Sept. 16, 4.30 P.M. [1877]. DEAR SON. I will write you a line or two anyhow—(it is so long since I have written anything in an envelope) — Pete, If you was to see me to-day you would almost think you saw your old Walt of six years ago — I am all fat and red and tanned — have been down in the country most of the summer, returned the past week — feel real comfortable for me — only I am still paralyzed left side, and have pretty bad stomach troubles still at times —but thankful to God to be as well and jolly as I am. I am all alone in the house to-day, and have had a good time — fine bright warm day — been out twice for short walks (my little dog accompanying me) — rest of the time up here alone in my 3rd story south room — done up and sent off my two books to a subscriber in England — eat my dinner alone, *wished you could be with me then and for a couple of hours if not more* — Pete, your papers all come regularly, and I am pleased to get them — About coming on I cannot say now, but *I shall come,* and before long

— Love to Mr. and Mrs. Nash,— Love to you, my darling son, and here is a kiss for you. W. W.

VI

431 Stevens St. cor. West, Camden, N. Jersey, Nov. 5 [1877]. DEAR SON. I think I shall try to come on to Washington next Monday, in the noon train from here, W. Philadelphia (limited express)— Am feeling about the same —(bad enough at times — but sort o' getting used to it,) —WALT. As I understand it, the train I speak of goes into your depot, 6th St. Must get in some time before dark.

VII

Camden, New Jersey, (Friday,) Dec. 20, 1878. Letter rec'd.— (And very glad every way — and thanks)— I think I am really better this winter —The cold and snow and ice keep me in the house — else I should have been over to the W. Phil. Depot — it would have done me good even to have a minute and a good hold of you once more — Nothing new in my affairs — I am doing well enough. Tell Mr. and Mrs. N. I want to come to Wash. once more, and I have not forgot the pictures. W. W.

VIII

2316 Pine Street, St. Louis, Missouri Nov. 5* [1879]. DEAR PETE. You will be surprised to get a letter from me away off here — I have been taking

* The address of his brother Jeff, with whom he stayed in St. Louis.

quite a journey the last two months — have been out to the Rocky Mountains and Colorado (2000 miles) (Seems to me I sent you a paper six weeks ago from Denver)— I got along very well until three weeks ago when I was taken sick and disabled, and hauled in here in St. Louis for repairs, have been here ever since — am fixed comfortable — still somewhat under the weather (but have no doubt I shall be well as usual for me before long)— shall stay here probably two or three weeks longer, and then back east to Camden.— Pete, this is a wonderful country out here, and no one knows how big it is till he launches out in the midst of it — But there are plenty of hard-up fellows in this City and out in the mines, and all over here — you have no idea how many run ashore, get sick from exposure, poor grub, etc.— many young men, some old chaps, some boys of 15 or 16 — I met them everywhere, especially at the R. R. stoppings, out of money and trying to get home — But the general run of all these Western places, City and country, is very prosperous, on the rush, plenty of people, plenty to eat, and apparently plenty of money — Colorado you know is getting to be the great silver land of the world — In Denver I visited a big smelting establishment, purifying the ore, goes through many processes — takes a week — well they showed me silver by the cart load — Then in middle Colorado, in one place, as we stopt in a mining camp, I saw rough bullion bars piled up in stacks outdoors

five or six feet high, like haycocks — so it is — a few make great strikes — like the prizes in the lottery — but most are blanks — I was at Pike's Peak — I liked Denver City very much — But the most interesting part of my travel has been *the Plains,* (the great American desert the old geographies call it, but it is no desert) largely through Colorado and Western Kansas, all flat, hundreds and even thousands of miles— some real good, nearly all pretty fair soil, all for stock raising, thousands of herds of cattle, some very large —the herdsmen (the principal common employment) a wild hardy race, always on horseback, they call 'em cow-boys altogether — I used to like to get among them and talk with them — I stopt some days at a town right in the middle of those Plains, in Kansas, on the Santa Fé road — found a soldier there who had known me in the war 15 years ago — was married and running a hotel there — I had hard work to get away from him — he wanted me to stay all winter — The picture at the beginning of this letter is the St. Louis bridge over the Mississippi River — I often go down to the river, or across this bridge — it is one of my favorite sights — but the air of this City don't agree with me — I have not had a well day (even for me) since I have been here — Well, Pete, dear boy, I guess I have written enough — How are you getting along? I often think of you and no doubt you often do of me — God bless you, my darling friend, and however it goes, you must keep up

a good heart — for I do — So long — from your old WALT.

IX

London, Ontario, Canada, (Saturday) July 24, 1880, P.M. Am all right again for me — was sick about three weeks — at times pretty bad — was well taken care of here — the best of friends both Dr. and Mrs. B. (as *human* as I ever met both) — Monday morning next I start on a long Lake and St. Lawrence River trip, 900 miles (mostly by steamer, comfortable I reckon)— gone nearly three weeks, then back here — May write you from Quebec. Your papers come.

W. W.

WHEN you read these I that was visible am become invisible,
Now it is you, compact, visible, realizing my poems, seeking me,
Fancying how happy you were if I could be with you and become
your comrade;
Be it as if I were with you. (Be not too certain but I am now
with you.)

Leaves of Grass (Ed'n 1892), p. 112.

LETTERS WRITTEN BY WALT WHITMAN TO HIS MOTHER

FROM 1866 TO 1872

TOGETHER WITH CERTAIN PAPERS PREPARED FROM MATERIAL NOW FIRST UTILIZED

EDITED BY

THOMAS B. HARNED

ONE OF WHITMAN'S LITERARY EXECUTORS

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THOMAS B. HARNED

PREFATORY NOTE

THESE letters from Walt Whitman to his mother follow in chronological order the series of Hospital Letters, edited by Dr. Bucke. It is quite unnecessary to say that they possess little or no strictly literary value. They are printed because they throw into relief the man as he actually deported himself in his domestic relations.

Whitman's attitude was not a pose. He lived daily what he wrote and preached. In these letters we learn little of Whitman the poet but we learn much of Whitman the man; and there is nothing to lessen our admiration for his character. In distress and poverty he did not whine, and, poor as he was, he always had something to spare for others, and he was always thoughtful of those about him. He sustained himself cheerily in surroundings the least æsthetic in the world. His was a human nature, unsophisticated and unspoiled. How little he cared for art or culture in any smaller, critical sense we can see. He interested himself in the simpler facts of life. It has been well said that a careful study of the concrete man baffles "all the idealization of fiction." Whatever throws light upon his character

and his prolonged apprenticeship is important. Therefore any papers prepared from material left by him become valuable. Some are printed in this volume. The period from the issue of the thin quarto of 1855 to the present ten-volume definite edition of Whitman's works is historically momentous. Whitman had a long struggle, and the victory has only come now after he is dead. A part of his struggle is recited in the letters connected with the stoppage of the publication of *Leaves of Grass* at the instance of the law officer of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and they are printed in this volume because of their biographical value.

T. B. H.

Walt Whitman to his Mother

Attorney General's Office, Washington, March 23, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER — I ordered the draft to be paid to you, of course. All you have to do is to go down & present it — they may ask you who you expected money from & where.

I don't know, but I expect Jeff or Mat would do just as well. WALT.

Mr. Lincoln, the post master, knows about the letters & money being stolen — the Post Office here has conferred with him on the subject.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, March 28, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER — Your letter came safe this morning, enclosing Han's — I was very glad to get both — Mother I wrote you three letters last week, the second one was in a big envelope, & the last was a small one you ought to have got Saturday — I feel quite unsettled how to send any thing — the letters seem to be so liable to be stolen — but I shall certainly fix it so as you get something every week Mother, some how — Seems to me George's arrangements, & the buying of the lots, &c. are very

good — also the shop. As Jeff says, he must have patience — Love to Matty & the children — & good bye for present Mother dear. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Monday April 23, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, I received your letter on Saturday — I am well as usual — shall write to Han to-day — Mother write soon as convenient after you get this, as I shall want to know if it reached you all right — I have no doubt George will do well in his business — of course there will be slack times once in a while — I have seen the "Radical" — Mother I sometimes think the old letter carrier you had, must be the thief — We have fine weather, plenty of rain to keep down the dust. — We had the greatest black procession here last Thursday — I did n't think there was so many darkeys, (especially wenches,) in the world — it was the anniversary of emancipation in this District—.

Mother, you must try to take the moving cooly— Well I believe that is all this time — Good bye, dearest mother,— Love to sister Mat & the little girls. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Saturday afternoon, Washington, April 28, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, I got both your letters — the last one has just come — It is too bad to be so troubled about a house — but then, mother, there might be troubles a great deal worse than that. Mother, when you get there,

& feel able, you must write me a few lines, & give me the No. of the house, & the right address, &c.

Well, mother, you must all try to get along the best you can. Try to take it easy as possible.

WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, May 7, 1866. DEAR BROTHER JEFF, By mother's letter I have heard about the moving & the new quarters — Mother says that she is glad they are no worse, under all the circumstances. I enclose an envelope to mother, with a little money in it.—As you see, I am still in the same place, with easy times enough, & a good place as I could expect.—The Attorney General is absent now in Kentucky. There is not much work. I can't tell whether I shall keep on here, or not. There is nothing at present that looks like a change — I feel quite well this spring — but a clerk's life here is not very interesting — I went down last Thursday to Mt. Vernon 16 miles down the Potomac — I think it is the pleasantest spot & farm I ever saw — went through the house & grounds &c — I was very glad I went — Yesterday we had the funeral here of a man you must have seen mentioned in the papers, old Count Gurowski, — I have been very well acquainted with him since I have lived here — he was a strange old man, a great lord in his own country, Poland, owner 30,000 serfs & great estates—an exile for conspiracy against

the government — he knew everything & growled & found fault with everybody — but was always very courteous to me, & spoke very highly of me in his book, his *Diary* printed last winter — his funeral was simple but very impressive — all the big radicals were there — The fight between Congress & the President is still going on — I think the President is rather afraid of going too far against Congress, for Stevens & the rest of 'em are very determined.

My hospitals are dwindled down to a small force — but there are plenty of cases to occupy me a couple of visits a week—I always go Sunday, sometimes in the middle of the week — Julius Mason is here in barracks yet — Jeff, I wish I could now & then be home & see you all, even if was only a couple of hours—

Give my best respects to Mr. Lane and the Doctor—I send my love to Mat & the little girls. Write & tell me all about home affairs, & how George is getting along — dear old Mother, as she gets older & older, I think about her every day & night. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Monday, Washington, May 14, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, I hope you are entirely over that sickness of last week — when you write you must tell me, — and also how you all get along with the new quarters — I think you must be pretty badly cramped. All goes on as usual with me — I spent yesterday at the Quarter Mas-

ter's hospital — it is the old dregs & leavings of the war, old wounds, broken down sick, discharged soldiers who have no place to go, &c — It is a shame that the Government has provided no place for such cases, of the Volunteer Army — they are just taken in here, to prevent them dying in the street — others go to the poor house — a good many break down after discharge, & have no pensions — & what is $8 a month these days anyhow?—

Mother have heard any thing lately from Han? I write to her every now & then — It is very pleasant weather here, quite cool to-day. Good by dear mother. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, June 12, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, I rec'd your letter of last Thursday — I suppose you got one from me the Saturday before, with some envelopes in, & $1— Well mother you have got a letter from that good for nothing pup again — it is too bad to be worried so — but one is powerless to do any thing, under present circumstances — I hope George will do well in the houses, if he & the others put them up on Portland av.—

I see there are cases of cholera once in a while in New York — you must all be careful of yourselves — it is very healthy here this summer — I hav n't been troubled by the heat yet — my head is much better — Mother I must tell you I am hav-

ing some *new shirts* made — quite an event — I can't hardly believe it when I think how those old ones you fixed, & fixed again have held out — but, poor old things, they have got played out pretty well — why I believe I have got one or two that you fixed for me when I went to Boston there six years ago, & more — I have 'em made in the same way as ever, & I think they are going to be very good — I expect to have half a dozen — so you see I *am* a coming out — had quite a clearing out the other day, collected all my old tattered duds & socks, & boots & slippers &c &c. into a great heap — and when Sally, our black girl brought up my breakfast, I told her she could have 'em all, if she wanted 'em — she was most tickled to death — took 'em all off home — there was nothing but what was all gin out, though —

There is nothing new with me in my affairs — if things would only work so that I could get a higher grade, with more pay, it would come very acceptable — but here I remain, in the same way as at first — however I am very glad to have what I have. Tell Jeff I should like to see him very much — I think he would find it pleasant to come here for a few days, even this season — Well dear mother my sheet is full—love to all WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, June 26, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, Well I suppose you have the hot weather too — it has been very hot here for

the last four or five days, but I have got along very well—I think of you every day, with the work & the heat, &c.—I believe you said that it was good air around there in Pacific St. well I should think that was one great advantage over Portland Av. any how. Mother, I rec'd your letter of last week—I do not go much to the hospital this hot weather—I think I feel better than usual now for a couple of weeks past—if I can only get through the summer as well as I am, I shall be satisfied—Mrs. Grayson gives me plenty of good vegetables, peas, string beans, squash & new potatoes, with fruit now & then, which is better than too much meat—old Mrs. Mix is well as usual—the house is very pleasant this weather,—as cool as it can be anywhere—I should like to hear from Han, but I suppose she is getting along in the same old way—As I am writing this letter at my table the celebrated Mrs. Cobb has just come in to see about some rebel pardon, some profitable job for her I suppose—she is a great piece—she is what most people would call a very pretty little woman—dresses gay, &c—but she has too brazen & silly a way ever to be taken for a lady by any one that knows—she has got lots of pardons & probably made a fortune—is half the time at the President's,—is not a good character.

This Washington is a great place—you see how funny the world is governed—& lots of queer doings that outsiders never dream of.

Well mother my new shirts are done, half a dozen, very satisfactory — I hav n't bought any new clothes this summer except a new hat, a big brim light drab, — makes me look like a southern planter, but is very light & comfortable — Mother, I wish you could sit here by the window I have so often mentioned, & have the cool breeze blow on you as it is now, & the trees & river & hills beyond, so pleasant —

Dear mother, you must try to take things moderate — because folks that worry & overdo are apt to get the cholera you know — I hope brother Jeff feels all right again — how I should like to see him & all of you. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Friday, Washington, June 29, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, I rec'd your letter this morning — I hope you have had as pleasant a change in the weather as we have here — it rained yesterday & the night before — & to-day the weather is just right cool enough — poor old Mrs. Mix is quite sick — Hector Tyndale has been to see me again — always talks about you — When in the army he had a very bad wound in the head — was a year getting over it — I think George must mind how he exposes himself to the sun, or gets overheated — I find I have to maneuvre through the very hot days, like a general in fight — I carry an umbrella, and if the sun gets to fall on me good & strong, any of the real hot days, my head gets swimming & I have to stop in

the street, or rather get inside some store or something, & sit down — I have had just that happen to me twenty times — so now I am very slow & careful — I think George might find a suit of good blue navy flannel first-rate for the hot weather — I am wearing mine — the suit I wore last summer — I never had anything for heat that suited me so well.

Jeff, I hope you had (or will have) a first rate time on your fishing excursion — I should like greatly to be with you—

Well good bye for this time, dear mother — I send you some envelopes. — Love to sister Mat, & the little girls. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, July 2, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, I got your letter of last Thursday — I wrote to Han two or three days ago — poor Mrs. Mix is very bad, — she has her old complaint neuralgia — she suffers very much indeed — it makes me almost sick. Some spells she has the agony is terrible & her screams are heartrending — fortunately her nights are comparatively easy — it is doubtful if she recovers — We are having delightful weather — just right — I went to the Post Hospital yesterday — Sunday — & who do you think was one of the first persons I found there — Jo Velsor, poor fellow he has had jaundice pretty bad, but is now getting very near well — so he goes out & around — he expects to go to work again in a day or two —

he has work in the Quartermaster's Dept. driving an ambulance—

Mother I suppose you got the letter Saturday last with the envelopes —

I hope you have as pleasant weather in Brooklyn as we have had here for a week past, & now —

It is generally expected Congress will adjourn the last of this month, & then there will be some high old times in politics & the Departments — most of us think that A. J. is only waiting for that to lay around him & kick up his heels at a great rate. Well, we shall see what comes to pass — but I guess the Republicans are just every bit as ferocious as he is — they won't back down an inch —

Mother the small bills I send you you might distribute (or get some fire crackers or someth'g), for Ed & Jenny & George — not forgetting Hat & sis — WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Oct. 30, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, I am well as usual, & hav'g good times — There is nothing new to tell you — I hope you are well, mother dear — & Mat & the little girls & Jeff & Georgy — I begin to want to see you all again — I hear there is a long & favorable piece about me & *Leaves of Grass* in an English magazine called the *Fortnightly Review,* — one of the highest rank, too—

Well, I am now going to leave off, & drink a

cup of tea — Near us there is a room where the Treasury ladies work — about noon they have tea — one of our own clerks has a sort of sweetheart in there who sends him every day a cup of splendid green tea — which as he don't drink the article — he always makes over to *me*—

Well mother dear, good bye for this time—WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Nov. 13, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, I have had a very bad cold the past week or so, but am feeling better to-day. I am at the office as usual every day.—The promotion I spoke about last week has n't come yet — I guess I had better make no reckoning of it till it comes — Mother I hav n't received any letter from you the past week —

I sent you day before yesterday a paper with the piece in (or most of it) from the London *Fortnightly Review,* — it was meant well, but a good deal of it is most ridiculous. Here in the office everything goes on as usual. The Attorney General and Assistant are very busy getting themselves ready to argue their cases in the U. S. Supreme Court, which holds a session here every winter, & all the big cases, in which the U. S. are a party, come off on such occasions. — We are having pleasant weather yet — a little dusty though. The O'Connors are all well — they have got to move, & are worrying a good deal about it.

Well, I believe that is all — so good bye for this time, mother dear. I send my love to Jeff & George & Mat & all. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Nov. 16, 1866. Friday afternoon. DEAREST MOTHER, I only write again this week — (I wrote last Tuesday) to inform you that the Attorney General has promoted me. — I have now a real good berth, what they call a third class clerk with the pay of $1600 a year.—I shall have about $127 a month (they take a little off, every time they pay, on acc't of gov't tax).— Besides I have now a regular appointment, instead of being a temporary clerk, as before. I was appointed last Wednesday, my new grade & pay commence on Nov. 1st — I have n't got a letter from home for ten or twelve days. The Attorney General has gone to New York — he is badly afflicted with sore eyes, & has gone there to see the best oculists —

My cold, or whatever it is, is better to-day — I hope you are all well — Good bye dear mother— *Write soon.* WALT.

Mother, I send some envelopes — You must have paper — you know I left you a great lot, when I was home. I hope you are not sick, dear mother.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Nov. 20, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, I suppose you got two

letters from me last week, Wednesday & Saturday — My cold still troubles me some — I have a good deal of pain in the head — I think it is neuralgia — but I guess I shall get over it — I have good meals, I do not cook for myself, at present — but get my grub at a good New England restaurant — Mother I received your letter a week ago — there is nothing new in the office — the poor Attorney General has a cataract forming on one of his eyes, & will have to undergo a surgical operation — Mother I told you all about my promotion & appointment to a regular berth, in Saturday's letter —

Well mother dear, I will bid you good bye for this week — WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Nov. 23, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, — I feel middling well to-day. I got to the office just the same as usual — If I had a good home where I could have a decent time, & keep in for three or four days, I should get all right — the principal trouble with me, I think, is neuralgia — it gives me great distress in the head at times — but the spells do not last long at a time — I eat pretty nearly the same as usual — but do not sleep well —

But I think I am making too much of it — I thought I would write you just a few lines, you would get Saturday.

You must tell Jeff or George to get the *Galaxy* of

Dec. 1, it is a magazine — it is for sale at most of the book-stands — 30 cts — it has a piece in about me — I think it is very good — John Burroughs is a young man from Delaware County, New York — he lives here, now, is married—I am well acquainted with him, & he & his wife have been very hospitable & friendly to me.

Mr. Conway's article was about as impudent as it was friendly — quite a mixture of good & bad.

I am glad you like Emily Price,— she is a good girl. She seems to me one that you need n't make any fuss or change — but let domestic things go on just as they may be, when she comes to visit you.

It is pleasant this afternoon — the sun is shining out — the river & hills on the other side look beautiful.

I sent Han a book *Lady Audley's Secret* — & shall send her a letter to-day.

Don't forget, George or Jeff, to get the *Galaxy* of Dec. 1.

Mother if any of you want another copy of the new *Leaves of Grass,* I can send you an order for one on the binder in New York, & you can get it.

Well mother dear, I believe that is all — except that I am getting a new pair of trouserloons — Shall not get any other new clothes this winter—

Love to George & all. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Nov. 27, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, I suppose you got a letter

last Saturday as well as the previous Wednesday — I am better than I was last week — not as well as I would like to be, but well enough to keep on with my work, &c. just the same as ever — I feel real well, sometimes, for a day—but then comes the trouble in the head again —

Did you get the *Galaxy* of Dec. 1st? — I think it a very good piece. Every thing here in the office goes on as usual. I got your letter mother. I wrote to Han last week. It is beautiful weather here to-day — I have got my new trousers — $20 ! ! only think of that! — it is lucky I wear my clothes a long while — WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington Dec. 3, 1866. Monday afternoon. DEAREST MOTHER, I thought I would write a day before the usual time, as I did not send any letter last Saturday. For the last two days I have felt a good deal better — my head is much better, & I feel more like myself every way. I sent Han a short letter last Friday & sent the piece from the *Galaxy* — I thought it would please her.—

I went to the Hospital yesterday afternoon—took a lot of tobacco, &c. I wrote several letters — there were quite a good many, some with old wounds — two or three in the last stages of consumption, &c. I go every Sunday, & sometimes Wednesday also — There are many of the patients, very young men, country boys,— several from the Southern states,

whose parents & homes & families are gone or broke up — & they have enlisted in the regular army — then they get down with fever or something & are sent to Hospital — I find most of them can't read or write.— there are many of these homeless Southern young men now enlisted in the regulars — they have no other resource—

We have quite a procession here to-day to "welcome Congress"— two-thirds of it consists of darkies— they look very well too — the streets are jammed with darkies — I tell you when they do turn out here they are thicker than crows in a cornfield —

The O'Connors have got to move — but can't get a house suitable — Every thing in the office same as usual — We are hav'g beautiful bright, coolish weather —

Thursday last, Thanksgiving day, four of us went out in Maryland 15 miles, to see the Great Falls, on the Potomac.—We carried a basket of grub, built a fire & made tea, &c had a first rate quiet time — the Falls were a fine sight — almost as impressive as Niagara — I much enjoyed the ride & every thing & it did me good — I felt well all day, & have felt quite well ever since. Love to you dearest mother, & to all. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Dec. 4, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, I wrote you yesterday.

(Monday), which I suppose you rec'd with the money I have just heard from Han, & I write to day because I knew it would be a comfort to you to know right away. Heyde has just sent me a letter,—he seems to be in a very good humor—writes a lot of stuff—but *not* about domestic affairs this time —on "poetry" & "Criticism" &c. &c.—of no interest at all to me—then at the close of the letter he says:

"Han is much better than usual, & is constantly promising to write to her mother."

Mother I send you part of the N. Y. *Times,* containing a good long piece about me.—It is the N. Y. Daily *Times,* of Sunday, Dec. 2, but perhaps George or Jeff brought it to you last Sunday.

I feel pretty well generally—with now & then a poorish spell—

I am going to hear the great actress Ristori tomorrow night. One of my fellow clerks has taken a seat for me, & made me a present of it—the play is "Queen Elisabeth"—I wish you & Mat could go with me—

The piece in the *Times* is by O'Connor. He grows stronger & stronger, & fiercer & fiercer in his championship of *Leaves of Grass*—no one can ever say a word against it in his presence without a storm.—Did you get the *Galaxy* of Dec. 1—?

William Swinton is here in Washington, temporarily. He is interested in speculating in gold. It is

very fine weather here to-day.—I am writing this by my big window where I can look out on the water — the sun is shin'g bright as silver.

WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Dec. 10, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, I have grown better the last four or five days, & don't have that pain in my head now.

Well mother, it is the middle of Tuesday afternoon, & the carrier has just brought your letter, (though I see it was written Saturday.)—Mother your letter is the first news I have had of the fire — it must have been quite an exciting time — & quite a sad loss, anyhow—

I went to see Ristori the great actress, the other night, & was very much pleased — but don't want to go again.

It has got pretty cold here the last two days — I wear my big old overcoat. Every thing goes on the same in the office — I have written again to Han — I send her some book or something to read, occasionally — I got a letter from Mrs. Price — Helen is not very well

Mother, I will send you another *Times* with Wm O'Connor's piece in.—It seems as if things were going to brighten up about *Leaves of Grass.* I rather think it is gon'g to be republished in England.—

Well mother, you must keep a good heart, — and good bye for this time WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Dec. 18, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, I rec'd your letter Sunday morning last — It has been very cold here too, but is pleasant now. I sent you a copy of *Leaves of Grass* which I suppose you have rec'd. Every thing here with me remains the same — I am free from distress in my head — Mrs. Grayson is very sick — she sent my old washerwoman, old Aunt Kitty, around this morning to see if I had any of "that bread my mother used to send me" — I suppose she meant the sweet Dyer bread — I gave her a piece a long while ago, & she liked it — poor woman, I think she is on her dying bed — Mother you must write to me how Jeff is, & how he is getting along — tell Hattie I hope she will take a lesson on the piano every day, and learn to play for her Uncle Walt, so when he comes home, she can play a beautiful tune — I have been down to the Hospital a great deal lately — A friend of mine that I have known over three years, a Maine soldier named Racliffe, was very low with consumption & bleeding at the lungs—He died Sunday morning — it was a great relief, for he suffered much — Well mother, I believe that is all this time.

WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Dec. 24, 1866. DEAREST MOTHER, I got Jeff's letter sending the money toward the soldiers' dinner — it was more than I asked for, & was very good of them all — I have not had any trouble myself worth mentioning

— the dinner has been got up at my instigation — I have contributed handsomely — but they (the Hospital steward &c.) have done the work.

Mother I sent Han a handsome little volume of *Florence Percys' Poems,* & $5 for a Christmas present. Sent it to-day — Poor Han — I suppose every such thing does her so much good —

Don't you believe that fool Heyde lately wrote a long letter to Mr. Raymond, editor of the N. Y. *Times* — in it he said "Walt was a good fellow *enough — but*" — & then he went on to run down *Leaves of Grass,* like the rest of 'em — The way I know is Wm. O'Connor was invited by Raymond to come & see him — & he told O'Connor he had received a number of letters about that piece in the *Times* of Dec. 2, which I sent you. He said they all praised the piece, & thanked him (Raymond) for printing it, except one he got from a fellow in Vermont who called himself Walt Whitman's relation— a brother-in-law, he believed — quite a good deal of stuff. Raymond seemed to think the man was either crazy or a fool, & he treated the letter with contempt. — I don't want you to write any thing about it to Han, of course — only if she was here we would tell her. The puppy thought I suppose that he could get his letter printed, & injure me & my book —

We are likely to have a pleasant day for Christmas — when I next write I will tell you about the dinner— I must inform you that I have had a present of a

beautiful knife, a real Rogers steel, to-day from the Attorney General — Mother $2 is for Nance — you can give it to her in money, or any way you like.

Well, dear mother, this is Christmas eve, & I am writing it in the office by gas light, so as it will be ready to go to-morrow — I have not heard since from Mrs. Grayson.— Good night mother dear.

WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Jan. 1, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, I have just rec'd your letter — I thought of you during that storm — it was very severe here too, & awful gales of wind one or two nights — The dinner in the Hospital was a complete success — there was plenty & good too — turkey & four or five kinds of vegetables, & mince pie, &c — then I purchased a large quantity of navy plug, & smoking tobacco, & pipes, &c. and after dinner every body that wanted to had a good smoke — & I had a lot of oranges, apples, &c. & a large sugar cake for supper — then I read some amusing pieces to them for three quarters of an hour, for a change — & sat down by those who were worst off, — &c. &c. Nobody else came in that day. — They have a Chaplain, but he is miserable coot, like the rest of his tribe.

I have written again to Han — I am writing this in the office, all alone — I am going down to the Hospital for a little while, & to carry some tobacco

— & then I am invited to O'Connor's to dinner at 4 o'clock — we are to have cold turkey, hot vegetables, &c. — They are going to stay where they are until next March. We have had quite a snow storm here — it is snowing moderately now. Some are out with their sleighs.—I am glad to hear such a good account of Eddy. It makes me feel quite satisfied.

I had a visit from Bayard Taylor a few days since.

Well good bye for this time, dear mother. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington Jan 8, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, Well, every thing is just about the same. I rec'd your letter New Years. I have rec'd a small present from Heyde — he sent me a small stereoscope, that is to put pictures in, & look through it, & it magnifies them, & makes them look like the real thing — it has some beautiful views of scenes in Vermont — I forget whether I told you that I sent Han some gloves & a $5 bill, Christmas — so I suppose this is in return — He says Han rec'd the parcels. Mrs. Grayson is still living — she is slightly better. I go to the hospital now oftener than usual — there are several very low — I just go for an hour or so, at a time — I had rather go than not —

Every thing is covered with snow here, looks wintry enough — cold weather, but somehow I like it — I have no fire in my room so far this winter —

I have rec'd a letter from Mrs. Price. — You must tell me how George is getting along with his business. You might ask George whether any thing could be done with $500 cash about getting a lot & moderate-sized two story house? — to pay 15 or $1600 on mortgage — whether they could get some one to take the rest on mortgage, so as to save themselves — Mat, I went to the opera last — went alone — I was much pleased — the piece was *Ernani* — first amusement I have been to in a year, except once to hear Ristori — Good by mother dear.

WALT.

I sent Jeff some envelopes for you a week ago.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Tuesday, Jan. 15, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, I received your letter of Wednesday evening last — I thought it would be very blustering & cold there on the hill this winter, & I know you must have freezing times, especially in the west rooms — We have had a great deal of snow here, & very cold weather. I get along very well considering.

Mother, I have to inform you that poor Mrs. Grayson has gone at last. I wrote in my last letter that I had met her son Willy in the street, Monday Jan. 7, & he told me she was somewhat better — well, it was that very night, she died, & was buried the next Wednesday — they sent me word that the funeral was to be at ½ past 2 — but the man did n't

tell me any thing about it till 4 — so I was not at the funeral — poor woman, she is at rest, & it is a blessed thing for her — she had an easy & peaceful death, I hear — But that devil, old Grayson, it is he that was the cause of her dying — about three days before her death, he had a fight in the house, with his son-in-law, — there was great excitement, & Old Grayson put them all out of the house, son-in-law, children, &c — I suppose that hastened Mrs. Grayson's death — I have not been there, but shall go & see poor old Mrs. Mix — She will not last long now — Old Aunt Kitty, the washwoman, says that Mrs. Grayson spoke much about me, & wanted me to come & see her — but I never knew any thing of it — (Mother I believe there can be a greater nuisance & devil even than Heyde)

Well, we are having pretty serious times here, in Congress, &c — I rather think they are going to impeach Johnson & bring him to trial — it is a serious business — I cannot tell how it will turn out — only I know both sides seem determined, & neither will give an inch —

There have been several died in the hospital, that I was with a good deal, since I last wrote — one of consumption — one of abscess on the liver, very bad — I was down there Sunday afternoon, carried a great big 12 pound cake, for the men's supper — there was a piece for all, & very acceptable — as the supper consisted of plain bread, a thin

wash they called tea, & some miserable apple sauce — that was all — I carry a big cake often of Sunday afternoons — I have it made for me by an old mulatto woman cook that keeps a stand in the market — it is sort of molasses pound cake, common but good.

I have received a letter from old Uncle Otis Parker, the old man that I got pardoned down at Cape Cod, Mass. He is very grateful.

Every thing in the office here goes on as usual. I have a little more work to do than I have had. One of the clerks, the youngest, was dismissed, (or suspended,) lately for selling some information about pardons to the "Herald" — the Attorney Gen'l was very mad about it, & gave him a sharp talking to.— We are having quite good sleighing here to-day.

Well good bye, dear mother,— & give my love to George, & Jeff, & Matty, & all. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Tuesday noon, Jan. 22, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, I rec'd your letter of the 17th — I have been think'g about you this cold weather — & especially the storm latter part of last week, that is, since the date of your letter — I see you have had it very heavy indeed,— I see a piece in the "Tribune," about a new book, a history of the Campaigns of the Ninth Corps — I send it, for George,— but it may be he has already seen it in the paper.

I am glad you treated Emmy Price so kindly — they were so hospitable to me — I should think it would be pretty hard to reach you up there on the hill, so you can't have many visitors. I see young Van Brunt Bergen here last week, he is in Jeff's office, the Water Works. — I hav n't seen Julius Mason for a long while — I think he must have left here. — The O'Connors are all well as usual — I was there to tea Sunday Even'g. —

We have had very rough weather here too, — Sunday it snowed hard & the wind blew in gusts, with now and then quite a gale. After dinner I started to go to the Hospital, as I had promised a big molasses pound cake for supper — but the snow was too hard, & the wind right in my face, & I gave it up — I postponed going till next day. —

I spend quite a good deal of time, evenings & Sundays, in the office at my desk, as I can get in the Treasury Building any time, as the doorkeepers all know me, — nearly all of them are broken down or one-legged soldiers — The office is warm and nice, with gas, & all the modern improvements, & I am all alone. I would like you to see our rooms — they are a suite of seven rooms, all in a row, or rather in the shape of an L, each room opening from the other — five of them are very large & high — one is the library, filled with books of law, mostly — but we have five or six hundred miscellaneous works — I have described to you before, my desk & window looking

out south, down the Potomac. In the Attorney General's room, there are nearly a hundred pictures, portraits of all the different Attorney Generals, from the days of Washington.—

I went round one even'g last week to see Mrs. Mix. Poor old woman, yet she bears up bravely — it was real affecting —Mother she makes me think of grandmother Whitman in her last days — She & all of them are going to scatter — the house was all in confusion, every thing torn up, & things being boxed up to be taken away— Mrs. Mix is going to Brooklyn to live with her granddaughter Mrs. Haskell (that is Mrs. Graysons daughter that married the young man, the protege of Mr. Beecher). The poor old lady said she was going on the train from here to New York last Friday night,— but it was so bitter cold, & snow on the track, I hardly think she went then — but I havn't heard yet — Living here for her or any of them is a perfect hell — I have heard that old Grayson is just as bad since his wife's death as ever — he gets drunk, & then tries to choke his son & daughter, & ends by getting in a fury, & trying to beat every body out of the house — but enough of the old villain.—

Mother I will write to you old Mrs. Mix's address in Brooklyn.—

To-day we are having it quite bright & pleasant — I am feeling well as usual — It looks like winter at the far north as I look from my window— every thing

as far as the eye can reach is white with a deep snow — Ashton, the Assistant Attorney Gen'l has just had a bad fall on the sidewalk, cut his face badly, & stunned him — will lay him up a few days — Love to Jeff & Matt & all. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Tuesday noon, Jan. 29, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, I wrote to Han last Saturday. I hope you manage to keep comfortable this cold winter,— it must be pretty tough up there on that bleak hill — It has been very cold here, but I have not minded it—My thick over coat that Nelson made comes in first rate this winter— it is quite good yet — I have not bought any new clothes for a long while — suppose I must get some next spring.

There is a Bill before Congress to give extra pay to the clerks — if it passes I shall have something extra, too — but I make no calculations on it, for I think it quite uncertain. The debates in Congress now are quite exciting — sometimes they hold their sessions quite late in the night, & things get to be quite stormy. William Hunter, (who is in the House, from Brooklyn, to fill out James Humphreys' term) called a Republican member "a liar"— so the Speaker had Mr. Hunter up before him & gave him a formal reprimand — it was last Saturday. Mrs. Mix went that cold Friday night, twelve days ago — I have not heard from her. It was a bad night for a journey, & the track was blocked with snow.

I receive letters from the soldiers every now & then. Within a week I have had two invitations — one is from a young fellow named Alfred Pratt.— I knew him in one of the hospitals two years ago, & more. His folks are farming people out in northwestern New York, near the shores of Lake Erie — he writes half the letter, & his father & mother write the other half, inviting me to come there & pay them a visit — The parents say they " will do every thing they can to make a country visit agreeable "— the letter is very old fashioned, but very good.— Then I had another invitation, from a Michigan boy. He has got married & has a small farm, not far from Detroit.

Do you remember Lewis Brown, the Maryland boy, who had such a time with his leg, & had it amputated at last in Armory Square Hospital? — He is quite well otherwise, & has got a place in the Treasury Dep't. I send the advertisement about the new book about the Ninth Corps—if George wants it I think he can find it at the American News Co. 121 Nassau st. New York — We have ill luck among the clerks &c. in our office — I send a little slip from the *Washington Star* — then another clerk Mr. Rowland, is lying very sick. It is doubtful if he recovers. Wm. O'Connor has just been in to see me — He is well & flourishing. WALT. Mother, no letter from you the past week —

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Tuesday afternoon, Feb. 5, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, I received your letter of Sunday week, Jan. 26 — Mother I hope that lameness in the wrist is better by this time. There is no news to write you this time.— I have heard that old Mrs. Mix got through safe to Brooklyn the next day — I looked for Jeff, but he did n't come — When you write, tell me how Jeff is —

I suppose you have had a great change in the weather in Brooklyn — we have here — for several days past it has been thawing & melting — Here in the office, it is the same old story — it is now about 12 o'clock — the Attorney Gen'l & Ashton have gone to the Supreme Court — they go most every day now from 11 till 2 — & I have little or nothing to do a good deal of the time when they are away—

Mother write whether Jeff got the books, for himself & Dr. Ruggles — write how Hattie is — Well, the sun is shining, & as I look out this morning on the Potomac I see the ice is broke up, & the river is all open — I hope we shall have but little more cold weather — I have not had a very agreeable winter — I have not had a satisfactory room & arrangements — I think I shall look around & get one more suitable —

Mother do you still have the office partly in your house — there in the long room? — Sometimes I feel as though I want to come home for about a week — I think it quite likely I shall come before long —

I should not be able to stay longer than a week —I will tell you though, in time —

Well, Mother dear, I believe that is all this time. Give my love to George & Jeff & Mat. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Tuesday noon, Feb. 12, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, I rec'd your letter of Wednesday last all right. I shall begin to look for Jeff tomorrow — I do hope he will come,— I have just changed my quarters — I moved to-day back again to the same house Mrs. Grayson used to live in — it is now occupied by a Mr. & Mrs. Benedict — I have not got my old room but a room right over it — it is in the attic, it is true, but I think it will be pleasant & cool in summer & all the quieter for being in the attic — every thing is new & clean, new bedstead, mattress, &c — I can't tell till I try, but I think I shall like it — that is, as well as one is apt to like any quarters here in Washington — I will write you how I like it in my next — I want Jeff to come & stay there with me — it will be pleasant & comfortable - it is 472 M st. 2d door west of 12th—

Mother, it may be I write kind of sober sometimes, but I have been this winter, & am now, in as good health as usual, & very good spirits — so, brother Jeff, I don't feel a bit "pegged out" — only getting old,— most 50, you know —

We have had another cold spell here, pretty nearly as cold as ever — There is great excitement

in Congress — they have night sessions — I went to the hospital Sunday afternoon last — there is a friend of mine there that got shot at Cold Harbor in June 1864 — & he has had the bullet in his body ever since — it was in a very bad place — the lower part of the stomach — just in the waist — last Saturday he had an operation & had it extracted — it was in the length of my little finger — it was a very critical operation indeed, — but he got through with, & is going to get well, according to all appearances now — There are lots of things left by the war yet. — I hope Jeff will not disappoint me — the prospect, as I write, is for pleasant weather — & Jeff can stop with me just as well as not — Love to George and Matty, & all. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Tuesday noon, Washington, Feb. 19, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, Well, mother, Jeff has been to see me at last — he left yesterday morning — I wish he could have staid a few days longer — He seemed to be well pleased with his visit, & I am sure it was a great comfort to me —

I rather like my new quarters — at any rate they are better than where I was previously — they are very good on some accounts, & not so good on others — but one must not expect perfection. When you write tell me how Jeff got home — We are having pleasant weather here now — the ice & snow are all gone — Mother, do you see the papers much?

I can send papers to you, only they would be rather old by the time you get them.

Well, mother I left my letter awhile, & have been out taking a walk, and now return and finish my letter — It is quite like summer — I looked for an Almanac but could n't find any to suit me — I am going out to Georgetown, and will find one there — I will send it to-morrow —

The O'Connors are much pleased with Jeff — Mrs. O'Connor has taken a real liking to him — I hope this will find you relieved of your rheumatism — I send my love to Matty & George & all. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Tuesday noon, Washington, Feb. 26, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, I rec'd your letter day before yesterday — We have had some stormy weather here too, but nothing so bad as you must have had — I wrote to Hannah last Saturday — I was down to the Hospital last Sunday, & also yesterday — there is a soldier there very bad with bleeding at the lungs — it is doubtful if he recovers — he is from Harper's Ferry, W. Va. — He is not willing to have me write to his folks, nor will he write himself — his mother is feeble, & he says it would hurt her — he is an only son — he is in the 44th Reg. Infantry — He likes to have me come & sit a while with him — so I go — I do not allow him to talk much, as it is best for him to keep very quiet. He is quite a Southerner, although in our army — &

takes great interest in politics — his name is Andrew J. Kephart — Mother I tell you all the particulars, as I know you will be interested tho' a perfect stranger. There are all kinds of soldiers in the hospitals, some good & some the other thing. But there are always some that appreciate deeply any kindness & friendship — & it helps them along too, more than one would think.

Mother I suppose you got your almanacks — both are calculated for *this* region, not New York, & one is a sort of Catholic almanac, — I saw it had all the Saints' days.

O'Connor, & the wife too, were both very much taken with Jeff, & speak about him often.

Surratt is here in jail — his sister Anna goes to see him most every day — poor girl.

It is pleasant here this forenoon — as I look out of my window, the river looks fine — there is a slight haze in the air but the warm sun is shining — O'Connor has just been in to see me a few moments — they have invited me up there to dinner, but I believe I don't care to go to-day.

I was up at the Capitol last night, to see the House in session, & walk around — there was nothing very interesting — they were debating some appropriation Bill. —

Mother dear I hope this will find you all right & free from rheumatism — Love to George & Mat & all. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, March 5, 1867. Tuesday forenoon. DEAREST MOTHER, I rec'd the letter you wrote last Wednesday,—It has been rainy weather again here, & plenty of mud—Sunday afternoon I was at the Hospital—that young man that was so low with bleeding at the lungs, Kephart, was easier—he was very bad just after I wrote last week—but Sunday it seemed as though he might recover yet if he had good luck—he has written to his folks at Harper's Ferry, West Va.

I went up to the Capitol Sunday night—Congress was in full blast in both houses—they paid no more attention to its being Sunday, than if it was any other day—which I thought a very good sign—

The Radicals have passed their principal measures over the President's vetos—as you will see in the papers.

There is much talk about impeachment—but I think it is very doubtful if there is any impeachment.

O mother I must not forget to tell the *great news among clerks* (far more important than Reconstruction, or impeaching Andy)—that is, we are going to have 20 per cent addition to our pay, for the present year—that is, I shall get quite a handsome little sum, back pay, & about $25 additional, a month, till 1st of July next—if I stay here. We havnt got the money yet, but I suppose it is sure—I like my boarding house very well, take it altogether—we have a tip-top table—& the folks are kind & accommodating.

The Old Congress went out yesterday, & the new one, (the 40th) organized right away — the Republicans have a strong majority —

It is dark & rainy this forenoon here — snow & drizzle —

Mother, you must not imagine anything about me — I am having good times enough — "eat well & sleep well," as Dr. Ruggles says — & have a pocket full of money,—which you can call upon when you want any — As I look out of the window while I write, I see we are having a little snow for a change — So good bye for this time, mother dear — Love to George & Jeff & all. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Tuesday, March 12, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, I rec'd Jeff's letter on Monday — I am sorry to hear you suffer so much with the rheumatism, & it is so bad in the wrist — Jeff thinks it is because you wash & do the rough work, & expose yourself too much — Mother I would like if you would get some woman to come every week, or every other week, for a day & do the washing, &c. — As to the little girls, Jeff says they *will* be with you, & bother you sometimes too much — When one is old one is easily tired and annoyed — & I have long been sorry you can't have more quiet to yourself & rest. —

Every thing goes the same as usual with me — The young man that had bleeding at the lungs

seemed to be getting along pretty well till Saturday & Sunday last, when he had a return of the sweating spells, — they weaken him very much — I was down there Sunday — He has been very dissipated though only 24 years old — I believe I told you he is an only son.

We had a warm & clear day here yesterday — after the usual long spell of rainy & dark weather — Washington is nothing but mud —

I took tea at O'Connors last Sunday night — they are all well as usual — have got to move the end of this month — they have found no place yet —

Ashton, the Assistant Attorney Gen'l has gone on to Philadelphia with wife & child to spend three or four days — I like my new boarding place very well, take it altogether —

Mother, I am writing this at my table, by the big window I have mentioned several times in former letters — it is very pleasant indeed — the river looks so fine, & the banks & hills in the distance — I can sit sometimes & look out for a long time — It is mighty lucky for me I fell in with such a good situation — Mother, if it was only so where I could come oftener, & see you & all — I have not thought any thing decided of the visit I spoke of — I will send you word in good time, if I should come — I should rather stop home, this time, if I come, as I should only be for a few days not more than a week — I can sleep in the room that George did — or any how.

O, I must tell you I am getting a new coat — sack coat, dark blue — I have pants of the same — & shall have to get a new vest — when I shall come out quite spruce — I had six shirts made last July, & they are good yet — so much for the clothing department.

Jeff don't say whether you got my last Tuesday's letter (March 5) with the envelopes, &c. — but I suppose of course you did — yesterday was such a fine day, I went off about 1 o'clock & had quite a jaunt,— went to Georgetown, &c. & walked so I got very tired, when I arrived home — we don't have dinner till 5 o'clock — but I always take a good lunch in my pocket — the table is furnished with plenty & good — Mother I think about you a great deal — I think what if mother is sick & bothered, & every thing — & I feel as if I should fly — I go evenings up to the office frequently — I have got me a splendid astral lamp, to burn gas by a tube & it works to admiration, (all at the expense of the office,) — & there I can sit, & read &c. as nice as you please — then I am getting many books for the Library (our office Library) that I have long wanted to read at my leisure,— & can get any book I want in reason — so you see it is a great privilege I have here. Love to dear sister Mat & little ones, & all. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, March 19, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, I got both your letters last week, & they were a relief to my mind — I want

to hear whether sis got over swallowing the penny — don't forget to write about it — It has been cold & disagreeable here, and another snow storm — but the sun shone all day yesterday — it keeps pretty backward here.

I went down to the Hospital Sunday — that young man Kephart was sitting up by the stove — he looked very pale and thin, but is doing far better than I anticipated.— I have written a letter to Han.— I have received a letter from Mrs. Price — they have most all of them been sick this winter — I see quite a good many notices of Dr. Ruggles' death in the papers — I enclose one printed in the paper here taken from N. Y. *Post* — there is quite a long one in the *Round Table,* of March 16.

Every thing is exactly the same in the office, & with me — Ashton has returned from Philadelphia — he tells me confidentially, that he has decided to resign, early this summer — I am sorry to hear it—

I hope George will have good luck with the houses he must take things cool — don't fail to write to me how every thing goes —

Well, I believe that is all, for this time, dear mother. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Tuesday forenoon, Washington, March 26, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, Your letter, including Han's, arrived, & I was glad to hear sis's penny had a safe journey — I was very glad

to hear George had sold one of the houses — & also to hear from Han.—

Mother, all the news I have to write about my affairs, is the same old thing — we have had another long spell of stormy weather here, rain, & snow, & mud — In the office, every thing as usual — I spend a good deal of the time there, nights & Sundays — it is quiet & agreeable — It is likely Surratt's trial will come on before long — I have become acquainted with St. Marie, the man who discovered Surratt in Rome — it is quite curious, & I will tell you when I come home.— He goes here by a false name,— he is very unhappy, & is in dread of assassination, from Surratt's friends — He came to me for advice, & wanted me to intercede for him with some members of Congress, as he says the government is treating him very coldly, as if they did n't consider he had done them any favor.— I declined to mix up at all in the matter, in any way. He talked a good deal, & told me a good deal about Surratt. It is quite an interesting story, & I will tell you all about it when I come home.— It was so stormy, the walking so dreadful, (half-melted snow,) that I did n't go to the hospital last Sunday. I have rec'd another epistle from Heyde—one of his regular damned fool's letters — I never answer them, nor make any allusion to them — it was full of complaints —

To-day it is bright sunshiny weather —yesterday, too — but rather cool — Congress is to adjourn this

week — they have carried all their measures successfully over the President — I am writing this at my desk — the air is very clear & I can see a great distance over the Potomac off into Virginia — the river is high & muddy to-day — I hope this will find you feeling well, & free from rheumatism. Love to George & Jeff & Matt. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, April 2, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, I rec'd your letter of March 28 — you must have had rather a dreary time this winter, the cold & storms, & being left so much alone — but now I think the spring is upon us, & I think it will be pleasant enough there all summer —

Dear Mother, I have not much to write this time — I am feeling very well, — no trouble in the head, nor any thing so far — I get along very well in my boarding house — the landlady is a young woman, from New York State, — but she works in the Treasury & leaves things to her servants, black women — I like her very well — & the place is probably as good a one as I could get — In the office everything is just the same — Ashton expects to leave next May or June. — We have had very pleasant weather here this week — only sometimes the dust is bad — I went to the Hospital Sunday & shall go again this afternoon — Kephart, that had bleeding at the lungs, & pneumonia, is quite recovered — when I came away, he

walked out a few blocks with me — there are one or two pretty bad cases that I go to see, yet —

Washington is filled with *darkies* — the men & children & wenches swarm in all directions (I am not sure but the North is like the man that won the elephant in a raffle)— I was glad you wrote about the little girls. Tell Hattie and sis Uncle Walt sends his love to them, & is coming home to see them. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Tuesday forenoon, Washington, April 16, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, I rec'd your letter last week a couple of hours after I sent mine. I have written to Hannah. Well, mother, we have had a spell of warm weather here — & last night & this morning we are having quite a rain — I can see the difference this morning already — the grass & trees are beginning to look green — they have made a large flower garden right in front of my window at the office.

Wm O'Connor is coming over to New York to stop three days — he goes on to-night — he may call on Jeff at the City Hall — but may be not — H. J. Raymond wants him to come to New York & write for the *Times* &c. — but I don't know as he will go — I went to a concert last night — Brignoli & Parepa — nothing very great —

There is nothing new at the office — I went up to the Supreme Court last Friday & heard the Attorney General Mr. Stanbery make quite a great

speech — he is a good speaker — you would have liked it.

I was down at the hospital Sunday — there was one poor young man a Maryland boy very bad from delirium tremens — (such cases are getting quite common) — this young man saw such sights & terrible things, he took it into his head that the Almighty was in a rage & punishing him — & he just got on his knees, & remained so for over 12 hours, prays away for mercy — so the Ward Master told me — I sat by him some time — he told me "They" went away while I was with him — he said he could hear "*them*" a good ways off — but they would n't come near him while I was there — he got into quite a little nap while I remained — you know if the delirium tremens patients can only get a few hours good sleep the worst is over — they are rational on most things — One of these men in the hospital had an idea there was a great cat gnawing at his arm & eating it — he had this idea for days & days, & of course suffered awfully — One of the watchmen of the Treasury (formerly a Captain in the Army, in an Ohio reg't), is there in the hospital, with delirium tremens — So you see what troubles there are in the world, of one kind and another —

We are quite busy at the office — have a good many people coming — so it is quite lively — We had a clerk here, who was a great nuisance to every body, a young sprig of a Virginian — he has cleared

out, forced to resign,—we are all very glad,—it makes a great relief—all the rest of us get along like brothers I like them all & they like me. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Tuesday, Washington, April 23, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, Since the other sheet was written & just as I was going to enclose,—your letter of Saturday came. You must not be uneasy about a place—there will be some provided—If not one way, it will be another, I hope—

So mother keep a good heart—I guess I must try to come on to Brooklyn & set you all right. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, April 29, 1867. DEAR BROTHER JEFF, I heard by William O'Connor of the St. Louis proposition—& as far as I could judge by his account—& since by your letter & mother's—it seems to me best to accept the offer, & go by all means.

It is a great work—a noble position—and will give you a good big field.

Jeff, I wish to hear about the family arrangements—whether Mother & Martha &c are going to stay there this summer, or not—(I hope they are).

There is nothing special with me to write about. In the office, all goes on as usual. I still board at 472 M st. Love to Mat & the little girls. Remember me to Mr. Lane & Davis—So good bye for this time, Jeff, dear brother. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Tuesday, April 30, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, I received your letter — also one from Jeffy. I wrote to Jeffy yesterday — I suppose it is for the best that he should go to St. Louis — as it seems to be a great position — I was much pleased to hear that it was Mr. Kirkwood who was the designing engineer — & also that Davis is to go to St. Louis on the works.

Well mother about domestic matters — I hardly know what to say at present — Jeff did not say in his letter what was proposed, or how he & Mat thought of doing — I can tell better after I hear — But Mother you must not worry about it — it will be arranged some way —

There is nothing new in my affairs — I have a little more work these days than usual, but get along first rate — am satisfied with the boarding house as well as could be expected. Love to you & all, dear mother. I write this at my desk — spring is quite advanced here — it is a damp, misty, cloudy forenoon — but pleasant — I can send you whatever money you need, dear mother, any time, — or can come on for a few days — try to take things coolly. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Oct. 16, 1867. DEAREST MOTHER, I have not heard anything from you the last week, but I hope you are all well & every thing goes right. I sent you a letter

last Tuesday, as usual. I suppose you have got your copy of the new book — I feel satisfied with the looks of it, — it might be better & handsomer paper, &c — but I am glad it turns out as good as it is — for, in making a book, you cant be certain how it is going to look, till it is all completed. Then I feel sure it tells the meaning better than any of the former editions — My enemies, & those who are determined to find fault, will of course still do so — But I feel that the book proves itself to any fair person — & will have a fair chance now, & go ahead. But the best thing, is it is *done,* & I shant worry myself any more with fixing & revising it—

I have sent a copy to Han & wrote her a letter — I am feeling first rate in health — I have a good place to eat — get good victuals & plenty of 'em — After the biggest rain-storm I ever knew, we have splendid weather here just now. In the office here, every thing goes on the same as usual. I like Mr. Stanbery — Ashton, the Assistant, will probably remain here this winter — I hope Jeff won't neglect to vote — George of course will vote — Love to Mat — Well good bye dear mother, till next time.

WALT.

Friday noon, Jan. 17, 1868. DEAREST MOTHER, Nothing new or particular — I send you an *Appleton's Journal,* with some good reading in it — Well,

mother, how are you all? — Last night was a heavy rain here — I thought of your roof — the snow has all disappeared here — very pleasant yesterday indeed here — to-day the whole city looks all washed clean — I went to a concert Tuesday night — very good — I heard a singer, Mario, I heard 30 years ago — an old man, now — yet he sings first rate yet — then Patti, a lady — & others. It was in quite a fine hall here called Lincoln Hall — I go there once in a while — (an editor of a newspaper here sends me spare tickets some times — that 's how I go, most of the time.—

I have got a letter from John Burroughs — he is at Middletown, N. Y. — don't expect to return here permanently to live any more — but will return to pack up & move — his wife is still here — I was up there a couple of evenings since — Mrs. B. is alone — has lately been vaccinated, & is not very well — there has been a good deal of small pox here — all the clerks in the office have been vaccinated—

Well mamma dear I believe I have scribbled down all the *snack talk* I can think of to amuse you — for this time — Love to you mother dear.

WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Sunday noon Washington January 26, 1868. DEAREST MOTHER, Well, I have been out to John Burrough's again to break-

fast this morning — We have a nice hot breakfast, buckwheat cakes, &c.—It seems to be regular thing, almost every Sunday morning — then we sit & talk, & I read the Sunday morning papers till about ½ past 10 o'clock — & then I walk down here to the office, about a mile & a half — Mother I have not much to write about, only the same old story — I believe I told you some time ago I had been applied to by an English magazine *The Broadway* to write something for them — well I have lately sent them a piece of poetry — if they accept it I shall get pay for it — The magazine is printed in London, but sold in New York also.

I wrote to Han last Thursday — I suppose you got your letter last Friday — I have not had any word from Jeff yet — We are having some great speeches made in Congress — this last week, there have been debates in the Senate, & the Republicans seem thoroughly waked up & full of fight — they have had the best of it, so far, in the speeches — some of them were first rate — I am going up to Congress, next week — hav n't been yet, this session — I went to Prof. Agassiz' lecture last Friday night — I was very much pleased — I pass the time very quietly — some evenings I spend in my attic — I have laid in wood & can have a fire when I want it — I wish you was here — I am already making reckoning of coming home on the next visit — but when it will be I can't tell — Mother I would take

a morning paper, the *Times* or something — it would help pass away the time — the debates in Congress are quite interesting now — Well dear mother I believe that is all this time. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Thursday noon, Washington, April 16, 1868. DEAREST MOTHER, Well, it is a dark cloudy day, & raining hard — the darkies were to have a great celebration here to-day, in honor of emancipation, — they turn out here in real good style, on such occasions — but it is too wet for them to-day — Mr. Stanbery is quite ill, as you see by the papers — The Impeachment trial still goes on — I went up, that day, but it was very crowded, & the air was so bad, I left, & went off & had a real good tramp, way up Georgetown, along the banks of the river — it is beautiful along there, of a fine day — So you see I am still able to get around.

There is nothing new in the office — the same old story — I have rec'd a number of papers from England with notices of my book, there — mostly friendly & favorable — more so than any here — Mother, I am very sorry you have those pains in your face & head — I should n't wonder if it was neuralgia — that is a violent inflammation of the nerves of the face & head — Mrs. Mix used to have it very bad — O, I forgot I believe to tell you Mrs. Mix is living yet — she had a very bad spell, but got

over it — Mother I have just got your letter of 14th — & was glad to get it — I have n't seen William Velsor for some time — will tell him when I see him —

Mother I send a couple of papers same time with this — they are not much, but will do just for a change; — poor old Uncle John — he is failing then at last — I suppose George is well & having good times — I see him every day as I have his picture tacked up on the door of my desk in front — Good bye dearest mother & take good care of yourself, & don't work too hard. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Tuesday afternoon, Washington, April 28, 1868. DEAREST MOTHER, I have received your letter of Saturday 25th this morning, — & glad to hear from you indeed -- I suppose by this time you have rec'd the letter I sent yesterday 27th — I sent you the *Galaxy,* but I see by your letter that George had already bought one. I have seen the piece in Thursday's *Times,* — John Swinton sent me one — so you can enclose it to Jeff — I have just received a letter from England, enclosing other notices — &c. — Mr. Conway is very friendly — but my friend Col. Hinton, (in his letter some weeks ago in the *Rochester Express,*) has given him, Conway, some pretty sharp cuts about his ridiculous anecdotes of me & of you too — Still Conway seems to mean all the good he can. — But such descriptions

of me as, "he was never known to smile or laugh" is altogether too jolly — Don't you think so? —

Thursday evening 8 o'clock. Well mother I will again write a few lines — I have been out most all the afternoon — went up first to the Impeachment Trial, & heard Mr. Evarts speak a while, & then left, for it seemed too pleasant outdoors to stay in there — I took a long walk, & ride in the cars away out in the suburbs, & so back to dinner, & now this evening another walk — & have fetched in here at the office to sit awhile, read the papers &c. — I received to-day another letter from old Mr. Alcott — I sent him the *Galaxy* with *Personalism* — and he compliments me highly & speaks of Mr. Emerson too and his friendliness to me — We have had a warm but very pleasant day — I am feeling very well — I only hope, dear mother, you are feeling well & in good spirits.

Friday evening, May 1.

Mother your letter of Wednesday, 29th, came this forenoon — it was too bad you did n't get mine Tuesday, as I put it in the P. O. myself Monday — So you are not going to move at present — I too remain in the same place, but have been going to move all winter & the spring too — I have been in the office all day to-day — all the rest of the clerks wanted to go up to the Impeachment trial, but I did n't care to go.

I have received another paper from England

to-day, with a tremendous big favorable notice of my book, between three and four columns — one of the friendliest notices yet written. The English publisher of my book, Mr. Hotten, sends them to me--

Saturday, noon — I am going off for the afternoon — Mr. Stanbery is to speak on the trial, & I may go in & hear him a few minutes, but I guess I shall spend my half-holiday mostly in jaunting around in the open air. Every thing begins to look like summer here — the trees are all green — we are having it pretty warm to-day, but a little hazy — it is now 12 o'clock, the noon-bell has just rung & I am off for the rest of the day — Take good care of yourself, dear mother —

Sunday afternoon Mother you see I am determined to make you out a letter — I have been sitting here in the office all alone, fixing up my new piece for the *Galaxy* — for I have still another piece besides those that have already appeared — Two have appeared, & now this is the third one, addressed to the literary classes — I want the *Galaxy* folks to print it in the July number — but they hav n't sent me word yet whether they will or no. — It is a pleasant day — we have had quite a rain storm yesterday afternoon & last night — I am going out at 6 o'clock to O'Connors to tea — Mother I hope you are having a pleasant Sunday.

Monday forenoon, May 4. Well, I had a quiet, agreeable sort of Sunday, — wrote & read most of

the forenoon, & rambled out in the afternoon — & went up to O'Connor's in the evening — he had two or three others there, visitors — O'Connors & Burroughs's are very hospitable to me, the same as they always have been — they are almost the only places I go — I send you a couple of papers same mail with this — I am going to send the MS of my piece to the *Galaxy* to-day, as I have just rec'd a note from them by mail this morning — I suppose George is well, & busy — I should like to see you all. Love to you dearest mother — I will write again next Monday. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Saturday afternoon, Washington, June 6, 1868. DEAREST MOTHER, I received your letter day before yesterday — & am sorry you are troubled with rheumatism — it must be quite bad — Do you have anyone to do the rougher housework? I hope you have. — Mother every thing is pretty much the same with me — I remain very well, — go around a good deal in the open air — we have it pretty hot in the middle of the day, & dusty — but the nights are beautiful — I know the Mr. Timonson you saw at the post office — he has been a sort of Deputy post master a good many years — Notwithstanding what he says, the Brooklyn P. O. has a very bad name, & a great many money letters sent there never get to their destination — But I should think by what you have

said that the carrier who brings your letters must be a good safe man — We had the strangest procession here last Tuesday night, about 3000 darkeys, old & young, men & women — I saw them all — they turned out in honor of *their* victory in electing the Mayor, Mr. Bowen — the men were all armed with clubs or pistols — besides the procession in the street, there was a string went along the side walk in single file with bludgeons & sticks, yelling & gesticulating like madmen — it was quite comical, yet very disgusting & alarming in some respects — They were very insolent, & altogether it was a strange sight — they looked like so many wild brutes let loose. Thousands of slaves from the Southern plantations have crowded up here — many are supported by the Gov't.

Yesterday I went up to the President's to see the reception of the Chinese Embassy — there were eight or nine Chinese, headed by our Mr. Burlingame, who is head of them all (O'Connor knows him quite well) — You will see the speech made to them by the President in the papers — I think it is first rate —

Sunday noon, June 7. I am sitting awhile in the office — we are having a spell of hot oppressive weather — It is generally thought we clerks will get our extra compensation — but I wait to see whether Congress will pass it — if they do I will make you a present mother dear —

Do you like the ticket, Grant & Colfax, do you mother? Well, I do, too — Chase is cutting up, trying to get somebody to nominate him, & doing his best to injure the Republican ticket — He is just the meanest & biggest kind of a shyster — He tried the same game at Lincoln's second nomination — Mother I send the *Chicago News,* No. 7 — have you rec'd the six others all safe? I have sent them all —

Monday forenoon, June 8, — Nothing special to write about this morning, mother. We had a thunder-shower last night & very pleasant this morning — I was up to O'Connor's as usual last evening to tea — they are all well. Well, I believe that is all — only to send you my love, mother dear — same to George write all the domestic news & about George's work & the house. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Friday afternoon, Washington, July 10. 1868. DEAREST MOTHER, I rec'd your letter this morning. It is too bad you don't get my letters Tuesday, as I send them in ample time Monday — they are in the P. O. here by noon & the mail don't close till about 6 P.M. — then the letters get in New York by ½ past 5 Tuesday morning —

We have had very hot weather—I thought about you — it is quite oppressive on me this summer — still I get along quite well — get along pretty well

nights — but every time the middle of the summer comes round, I think I will never stay through another summer in Washington, if I can help it.

Saturday noon — 11th. We are having a very hot day — How do you all like the nomination of Seymour and Blair ?— It is a regular old Copperhead Democratic ticket, of the rankest kind — probably pleases the old Democratic bummers around New York and Brooklyn — but every where else they take it like a bad dose of medicine — the Democrats are dissatisfied here the worst kind —

O'Connors have had quite a serious falling out with Mrs. Burroughs — John is away yet — may call upon you on his way home — Mrs. B. is a curious woman — but has been very kind to me —

Of course you must n't let on that you know anything — only you might mention to him that I often write about the wife's & his kindness to me — but probably it is doubtful if he calls —

Mother I am sitting here by my window in the office — I dont have the smell of any streets or gutters — but it is burning hot & hardly any air stirring — fortunately we have moderate nights — & so I manage to get along —

Monday morning 13th. It still keeps hot & no rain — I was up at O'Connors a while last evening — Ellen O'Connor is quite sick — has a bad attack of dysentery — the rest are all well —

Nothing decided yet about who shall be attor-

ney General — everything goes on as usual in the office —

Well, mother, I must close — it is now a little after 10 — there is a pleasant breeze blowing in from the river, quite refreshing — Good by for the present, & love to you & all, mother dear. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Friday noon, Washington, July 17, 1868. DEAREST MOTHER, I have nothing particular to write about, but I thought I would just write a line. I hope you have stood the hot weather, without giving out — & George too I hope he exercises more care about himself, because I think our family is more liable than many to the effects of the great heat & exposure to the sun —

I have got along pretty well, but it has been awful hot & continues so though as I write here by my window, there has quite a cool breeze sprung up since I commenced writing — Fortunately, I sleep very well nights — there has been only one night I havn't slept comfortably — We have a new Attorney General, Mr. Evarts, as I suppose you have seen by the papers — He has n't made his appearance here yet — but is expected soon — I only hope he will be as agreeable for a boss as the others have been — but somehow I don't believe he will — I am really sorry to have Binckley go, for he was a good friend of mine — & Mr. Browning too — Mother, I do hope you will get through this awful spell all right — it

can't last much longer — & George too — Mother don't look for the next letter till *Wednesday next* — I had a letter from Jeff — All are well and hearty except Mat has some cough yet — take care of yourself dear mother. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Thursday noon, Washington, Aug. 13, 1868. DEAREST MOTHER, Your letter has come this morning — I always read it through, & then in the afternoon read it through a second time — every little item is interesting — poor Mat, she has indeed had a narrow escape — to think how it might have happened by another hair's breadth — We are having beautiful weather here — quite cool, except in the middle of the day — I am feeling well as usual — nothing special or new in the office — all seems to go on smoothly — Mr. Evarts is here — Ashton has gone to New York for a few days — I have just sent off quite a batch of letters to Hannah —

Saturday 15th — I took a sail down to Alexandria yesterday — it is six or eight miles — you go down in a steamer, something like the Brooklyn ferry boats — & to-day I have just been out for nearly two hours — so you see I am not confined very closely — We have not much to do in the office — It is beautiful weather again to-day, cool enough, and I feel very well — it is probable that I shall not take my leave of absence for a few weeks yet — I will send you good word.—

There are a great many clerks dismissed, from the Treasury, War & other Departments — several hundreds — & more to be dismissed — it makes a good deal of distress — many have families — as far as appears at present, I expect to stay on as usual —

It is now about one o'clock — a cool breeze is blowing in from the river — Mother dear I hope you are feeling well to-day & everything is going smoothly — I hope George is well, & having good times — I suppose the house must be most finished — You must tell me all about it, when you write.

Sunday forenoon, 16th. — I am sitting here by myself in the office — it is warm, but pleasant. It is pretty dull here in Washington now that Congress is away.

Afternoon. — ½ past 3 — We have had a hot day so far — had a good dinner — good roast beef & apple pie — had company to dinner — I have come around to the office to sit quiet awhile by my big open window — nice old window — I have spent so many quiet comfortable hours by it, I shall be sorry enough when I leave it — I never get tired looking out, there is rivers & hills & gardens & trees — can see ten or twelve miles — & boats sailing. I am going up to O'Connors towards 7 o'clock as usual — I am working at my leisure on my little book — I don't know whether I have spoken of it before — in prose — those pieces in the *Galaxy* form portions of it — it is on political and literary subjects — It is a real

pleasure to me — the new edition of *Leaves of Grass* is all ready fixed — so I don't bother with it any more —

Monday forenoon — Aug. 17 — Well mother I will close up my letter & send it off to-day — I went out to O'Connors as usual last evening & staid till after 11 o'clock — they have got another house & move in about a month — We are all quite busy to-day in the office — Mr. Evarts & Ashton are both here now, & we have to fly around — Well I enjoy it better — the pleasant weather continues — we need rain — dear mother how are you getting along, & how is the rheumatism? Love to you & all. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Monday afternoon, Washington, August 24, 1868. DEAREST MOTHER, I send you some envelopes—they are already stamped —I send you one with Mat's address & one to Han, so you will have them ready when you want to write. I rec'd your letter of last Wednesday — I hope it will work so that you can have apartments in George's new house, if possible—it must be anything but agreeable there in Atlantic street, on some accounts, but there is always something — I have not been satisfied with my boarding place—so several weeks ago I tried another place & room for a couple of days & nights on trial, without giving up my old room — Well, I was glad enough to go back to my old place & stay there—I was glad enough I had n't given it up — there are some things I don't

like but there are others very good indeed — it is situated in the healthiest, sweetest part of Washington —two of our boarders, clerks, have left—they have lost their places—one in the War, and the other in the State Department.

It is overcast here to-day, but warm—I enjoy it—go around in the open air a great deal, & take things moderate — Want to see you, dear mother, very much indeed, but don't think I shall leave till latter part of September — I do hope you are feeling quite well, & not working too hard — You say you think I like Washington so much — Well I am satisfied here, but not particularly attached to the place — only I think it is better for me as things are, & better all round — if it could only be so that I could come home for a little while, & frequently, I should want nothing more — but one must n't expect to have every thing to suit perfectly.

I am feeling well as usual — Now that the awful long hot spell is over, I can hardly believe I have stood it so well — & you, too, mother dear, seem to have got along a great deal better than I would have expected — Things are dull enough in Washington, but it suits me just as well — Mr. Evarts has gone home — he has a farm at Windsor, Vermont — his family lives there — he has a large family of children — Ashton is running the office — Love to Georgy & all — Good bye dear mother. WALT.
The 50 cts is for Ed.

Attorney General's Office, Sunday forenoon, Washington, August 30, 1868. DEAREST MOTHER, Well, here I am, sitting alone in the office, Sunday, writing again to you, dear mother. I rec'd your letter last week, all right. It is pleasant weather here, but warm — we had a heavy rain night before last, which laid the dust. There is nothing new with me, or in the office. Mr. Evarts still remains away up on his farm at Windsor, Vermont, with his family. — Ashton runs the office — Mrs. A. returned to Washington last evening, after two months' absence — she left her little boy in New York, she is not well. — The O'Connors expect to move the coming week — They have got a nice little new house, two story, five rooms — it is about four or five blocks from where I live — they pay $30 a month — They are all well as usual — the Burroughs's the same —

You would be amused to see some of the visitors I have now & then — One was a middle aged, brown-complexioned lady, a great spiritualist & lecturess, — she broke off in the midst of the conversation — then after a while told me that she had been spoken to by the spirit of Abraham Lincoln, and begged me to excuse her, as she wanted to talk with *that sperit* — I politely told her I would excuse her under the circumstances — & off she went. Then another day a tall well-drest man, a perfect stranger, came & said he had

seen a good deal about me in the papers — said he had been an officer in the army — & wanted me to get him a place under government, as he was hard up — I got rid of him as gently as I could — but yesterday he came again & wanted me to let him have $10! — So you see my official life, with all its monotony, is not without a little fun, now & then, for a change.

Then I must tell you that a lady, a Mrs. McKnight, looks & acts quite a good deal like our Mary, has called upon me, a few days since — & I will tell you what for. She is quite a portrait painter, & very ambitious of being a first rate artist. At present she seems to be tolerably good. Two of her pictures I have seen, are real good — Well she wants to make a portrait of my beautiful countenance for herself to keep & came to ask me to sit for her — Well I consented — but don't think I shall begin until I return from my leave — So you see I have visitors & applications of all sorts.

Monday forenoon, Aug. 31. Well mother it is the last day of summer — we have had it very hot & melting here for two or three days — but there is a cool fresh breeze blowing in here as I finish my letter — it is quite pleasant, as we have had some fine showers lately — I hope this will find you feeling well & in good spirits, dearest mother. Love to Georgy & all — WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Monday forenoon, Washington, Sept. 7, 1868. DEAREST MOTHER—Your letter came Saturday, with the acc't of the accident & sudden death of little Andrew—poor little child—I believe I have never seen him—it was sad enough—but the poor young one is out of this world of sin & trouble—& I don't know as we have any cause to mourn for him—

Mother my leave of absence will commence early next week, but I will send you word two or three days before hand, when I shall come on. I have a good long leave & want to rest myself as much as possible, & have a change of scene, & a quiet time, & no literary or other work to bother me—only just have a good quiet moderate time, for somehow I feel as if I wanted to throw off everything like work or thought, for a while, & be with my old mammy at least a good part of the time—

Mr. Evarts is still away—O'Connor was to move to-day but it is showery & he has postponed it till Wednesday—I was up there last evening, & had tea & spent the evening.

I wrote to Han Saturday last, & enclosed your letter in mine—I am still at Mrs. Benedict's, 472 M st.—find it about as good as I could probably get anywhere—most of the boarders have left—I and *another young man* are the only ones left—they were in the Departments and were discharged—Many have been discharged within the last two months,

& many more the end of this month are expected to be. It makes great misery among some, especially with families — O'Connor & Burroughs still retain their places —

Well mother, the summer is pretty well over — they say the folks are coming home from the country, &c. I am glad I did n't take my leave 1st of August, as I expected to at one time, but was disappointed — when you get this I wish you to write one more letter, — but no more till you see me — I think it is going to be a fine day — I am feeling well — well — I have a long job of copying to do for Ashton so I will wind up my letter & set about it — I shall write once more before I come — Good bye for this time, dear mother. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Nov. 24, 1868. DEAREST MOTHER, I suppose you got my letter last Saturday, 21st — All goes along at present the same old story — nothing new in the office — I shall be glad when Grant comes in, & a new Attorney Gen'l appointed — if I weather it out till then — though I am well enough off, at present, & probably safe — I don't think there is any show for Mr. Evarts remaining here after Grant comes in—

We are having a splendid spell of weather again after the storm of Saturday last—To-day it is very fine — I should like to be with you on Thanksgiving, Thursday — I shall take dinner at my boarding house

— Mrs. Benedict told me yesterday to bring any of my friends to dinner I wanted to — I still have the same room — I make a fire mornings, & have it quite comfortable —

Is Jeff home? Martha must keep up good spirits — I have no doubt she will get all right again — I approve what you advised her about the wine — it is as George said, you can't get any real pure port wine — I shall keep watch of the place in Western Pennsylvania I spoke of, & if they have any genuine wine, as I was informed, they would in January, I shall get some for Martha —

Has George done anything about the Portland av. house, yet? Write to me all the news. Your letter came last week, & was welcome — I am quite busy to-day — have several jobs of work in the office that keep me hard at it —

Love to you dearest mother — & to all —

I have to scratch off my letter in a hurry, but I want you to have something according to promise in my last. WALT.

Attorney General's Office, Washington, Tuesday, 2d Feb. 1869. DEAREST MOTHER, I am still troubled with a severe cold in my head — I suppose it is that which causes me to have these bad spells, dizziness in the head — I have them a great deal lately, sometimes three or four in an hour —

The 20 per cent bill came up again in Congress

yesterday, & was rejected again — I don't think there is much chance for it. —

It looks as though we are going to have snow — feels cold & raw — I am sitting at my desk in the office writing this — there is not much to do to-day in the office —

Wednesday Afternoon — It commenced snowing yesterday afternoon & stormed all day, & a rain at night — I have been out today — not any work hardly in the office — still I have to be around — it is a dark & muddy day here — a young man has just been in with a photograph of me, — his mother had bought it at a place here, & sent it to me for me to write my name — I gratified him — they have taken a very good little photo of me here lately — I will send you one before long — It is now three o'clock, & the colored man has commenced to clean up — so I will vamose —

Great excitement here among the politicians — Cant tell you who will be the new Attorney General under Grant — but don't think Mr. Evart will continue on — still I don't know.

Saturday forenoon, Feb. 6th. Mother, your letter has just come this forenoon — You must not worry about Han — one can't tell anything about it — but it is probable things go on with them just as they always did — I believe I shall write to Han again — shall not say anything about Heyde, of course —

We have had a cold snap here — but this forenoon it is very pleasant, bright, & comfortable enough —

I did not have any bad spells in the head yesterday — nor, so far, to-day — My cold in the head has been extremely bad & is not well yet — Went up to Ashton's Thursday even'g to spend the even'g with some company — had supper about 9 o'clock.

I get along pretty well at the old boarding house — I suppose it is about as well as I could do any where — I make a fire these cold mornings, to wash & dress by — it has been very cold lately —

Monday forenoon, Feb. 8. Well mother I will finish my letter & send it off — I thought to send it yesterday, Sunday, but did not come down to the office. All goes on the same with me — it is now about 11 o'clock and very pleasant — I am rather busy today with work in the office — but nothing to hurt — I have had a present of the most beautiful red rose you ever see — I have put it in a little glass of water on my desk — Love to you dearest mother, & George & all. WALT.

Washington, Tuesday afternoon, Aug. 13, 1872. DEAREST MOTHER, There is nothing new with me — I am well — Mother I feel as if I wanted to come on there & pay you a little visit — and as I can probably get off for a few days, I should n't wonder if I come soon. I think as I am likely to come quite a good deal, I would like in future to pay Sister Lou $1 a day

for what time I stop there — I should feel better satisfied & come oftener.

It is quite cold here. I am wearing my overcoat — you see mother I am likely to prove a true prophet about Greeley — He is *not* expected here at the White House next March.

Mother dear, I hope this will find you feeling comfortable — I will send you a line before I come — which will probably be within a week — Love to you dearest mother & to George and Lou. WALT.

Thursday afternoon, Aug. 22, 1872. MOTHER, I suppose you got the letter last Wednesday, I sent — I have written a few words to Han. It continues very hot here, and is now dry again — nothing new with me — I am sitting in the office writing this, Thursday afternoon. — I keep quiet as possible — for if one stirs two steps the sweat runs off him —

It is 3 o'clock — there is a little air stirring to-day, but out doors it is like an oven — John Burroughs has just been in to see me — he comes in most every day — Mother I hope you will not get affected by the heat — By accounts it must be worse in New York than anywhere else —

Friday noon, Aug. 23. Mother, I just rec'd your letter — I hope by the time you get this, you will get the things — I want to come — perhaps about the 31st — (but if you all are not to rights I will put it off another week).

When you write again tell me whether Ed has recovered his spirits — Mother it is always disagreeable to make a great change, & especially for old folks, but a little time gets things working smoothly, & then one is glad of the change, & better off.

I am feeling quite well to-day — the weather is pleasanter — had a good sleep last night —

I think Grant stock is steadily going up, & Greeley stock down, here & everywhere —

Love to you mamma dear, & to Lou & all.

WALT.

Washington, Tuesday afternoon, Aug. 27, 1872.

DEAREST MOTHER, There is nothing particular for me to write about. I am well as usual, and getting along all right, except the hot weather. That continues here without much let up — Mother I hope the things have arrived by this time, & that you have got your bed fixed. I have had a visitor to-day and yesterday, a young Hungarian gentleman, quite agreeable, talks English well, quite a traveler — went over to the White House with him yesterday & went all through —the President & family are away, but Gen. Dent conducted us through, & was very polite. Mrs. O'Connor made me a call Saturday, & John Burroughs to-day.

Mother dear, as soon as I hear from you I will write more particular about my coming to Camden for a day or two. Mother I shall probably send the order in my next. WALT.

Washington, Thursday, afternoon, Nov. 14, 1872.
DEAREST MOTHER, I send you Jeff's letter to me, just received.

Mat is better, it seems, & has put off journeying to Camden.

Jeff says it is doubtful whether she will come at all, unless she can have you go home with her to St. Louis.

Mother, just let the thing take its course, & not disturb your mind on the question of going or not going — It will be time enough to decide, when it comes to the point —

Mammy dear I got your letter this morning — glad to hear you are as well as you are, & hope this will find you comfortable — All goes well as usual with me — Love to you dear mother — & to all. WALT.

Walt Whitman and Oratory

By Thomas B. Harned

Walt Whitman was gifted with many of the attributes of a great orator. His build, his commanding stature, his exceptional health of mind and body, his highly developed moral and emotional nature, his courage, firmness, and resolution, his creative imagination, the grace of his movements and gestures, the magnetism of his presence, the cheery, ringing, clarion voice, his sense of harmony, his freedom from conventions, his originality of thought and statement, his sympathy with humanity, the personal conviction that he had an important message to deliver to the American people, and his determination that he should be heard, all favorably qualified him to approach an audience through oral statement.

Among his papers I find many notes and suggestions on the subject of Elocution and Oratory. It is quite evident that very early in life he gave much attention to the study of public speaking and had formulated a purpose to present his message in that way, before he adopted the plan of reaching the

people through the medium of a printed book. This is a very interesting period in Whitman's life of which little has been hitherto known. It was his habit to make notes of his daily thought on any subject and to place the memoranda in a package devoted to that subject. From such a sheaf marked "Oratory" I obtain the material which I shall use in writing this paper. I regard it as very valuable. These notes display a mind early matured and wonderfully orbic. These notes constitute a text-book of more than common comprehensiveness upon the subject of public speaking. Few will seriously quarrel with his principles. This material will have value only because I shall leave it as much as possible verbally Whitman's.

Whitman's belief in his ability to address public assemblages was manifest. He said at the start: "The idea of strong, live addresses directly to the people (admission 10 cts.) North and South, East and West — at Washington, at the different State capitols, Jefferson (Mo.), Richmond (Va.), Albany, promulgating the grand ideas of American ensemble, liberty, concentrativeness, individuality, spirituality, &c. &c." "Washington made free the body of America for that was first in order. Now comes one who will make free the American soul."

"The place of the orator and his hearer is truly an agonistic arena. There he wrestles and contends with them — he suffers, sweats, undergoes his

great toil and ecstasy. Perhaps it is a greater battle than any fought for by contending forces on land and sea."

On the subject of Gesture, I select at random from Whitman's notes.

"Subordinate and keep back, as with a strong hand, all gestures, except a few irresistible ones, and look carefully to the termination or subsiding of gestures, namely: the falling back of the hands, arms, &c. into position after they have been put out of it.

"The amount of all this about 'interior gesture' and a flowing forth of power, simply is: that so much must have been generated, such an exhaustless flood of vitality, tone, sympathy, command and the undeniable clinch (all the product of long previous perfect physique through food, air, exercise, &c. &c.) that a subtle something equivalent to gesture and life, plays continuously out of every feature of the face and every limb and joint of the body, whether active or still.

"Restrain and curb gesture. Not too much gesture. Animation and life may be shown in a speech by great feeling in voice and look. Interior gesture, which is perhaps better than exterior gesture.

"And again, sweeping movements, electric and broad style of the hands, arms and all the upper joints. These are to be developed just as much as the voice by practice.

"And again the strong, yet flexible face. By persevering exercises, muscular, mental, copious, practice of face, all the muscles attain a perfect readiness of expression, terror, rage, love, surprise, sarcasm.

"Animation of limbs, hands, arms, neck, shoulders, waist, open breast, &c. — the fullest type of live oratory — at times an expanded chest, at other times reaching forward, bending figure, raised to its fullest height, bending way over, low down &c."

On the subject of style, let me select again.

"The great conciseness of matter fit for the public, and the necessity that there should be no hasty thrusting of one word or thought before the preceding words or thoughts have had time to alight and remain upon all the hearers, makes it a main thing in oratory to preserve a style as if held by a strong hand, a determined, not hurried, not too pouring style of vocalism, but yet animated and live with full swelling, serious life."

And again, he says to himself: "Practise and experiment until I find a flowing, strong, appropriate, speaking, composition style, which requires many different things from the written style."

"A certain live, alert, self-possessed, slowness — as of one fully weighing what is to be said, and reserving himself for labor ahead, also determined to give every passage or word their fair proportion — also to drive every one chock up into the hearer."

"First to inhale slowly ample breath, two or three times; speaking of the actors in the Theatre of Bacchus, in Athens where the pieces of Sophocles, Æschylus and Euripides were played—they observed a rigid diet in order to give strength and clearness to the voice.

"No miracle recorded in the ancient Pythia or of Christ is any greater than those of perfect reading. A perfect reader must convey the same pleasure to his or her hearers that the best vocalism of the Italian singers does, just as much as the voice of Alboni, Bosio, Bettini, or Brignoli does. There must be something in the very vibration of the sounds of the mouth, something in the movements of the lips and mouth, something in the spirituality and personality that produces full effects.

"Develop language anew, make it not literal and of the elder modes, but elliptical and idiomatic.

. . . . "elliptical style as not to explain and spread out, not to be afraid of ellipses. An audience of Americans, would they not soon learn to like a hidden sense, a sense only just indicated? As just to indicate what is meant and let the audience find it out for themselves. Whether the whole of the present style of orations, essays, lectures, political speeches &c. is not far below the level of American wants and must not be revolutionized.

"The whole oration may be brief, yet illimitable by the manner, personality, style of me. Not hur-

ried gabble, as the usual American speeches, lectures, &c. are, but with much breadth, such precision, such indescribable meaning, slow and with interior emphasis. Counterparting in the first person, present time, the divine ecstasy of the ancient Pythia, oracles, priests, possessed persons, demoniacs &c. This is for oratory, a great art, combining much physical with equally much mental, great control needed, great bodily purification, diet, strength and vocal copiousness."

And he speaks of "talking directly" to his hearers, "as: you so and so. Why should I be so tender with you? Have you not (so and so) &c."

"From the opening of the oration and on through, the great thing is to be inspired as one divinely possessed, blind to all subordinate affairs and given up entirely to the surgings and utterances of the mighty tempestuous demon.

"I think there is a (hitherto undiscovered) great art and effect in a certain monotony of pitch of voice in passages.

"Talk only of what is insouciant and native and spontaneous and must inevitably be said, otherwise, silence."

And he speaks of "a slower style with long intervals of pauses, as in reading a chapter from the New Testament, the death of Christ, with a long pause after each verse, and sometimes between connected words of the same verse."

On the subject of boldness he never tired of repeating: "Be bold! be bold! be bold! Be not too bold! With all this life and on the proper emergency, vehemence, care is needed not to run into any melodramatic, Methodist Preacher, half-inebriated, political spouter, splurging, modes of oratory. At first all possessed, severe, full, as standing over the subject, perfect commander of it — not letting out all that is known at first — reserving the best till due occasion."

He gives as "an invariable rule for the commencement of a great oration, first, to inhale ample breath, to stand immobile and motionless, the head immobile and motionless, the usual duckings and wabblings altogether intermitted. Never commence with apologies. Let the gestures and excitements come up in their own time. Action of the hand, not too sudden — no saw movements — no wagging the forefinger; a large stately style depends very much upon the hand, arm and wrist.

"One spinal idea from one brain, to each specific lecture, oration or address, concentrate toward that visible or invisible.

"The greatest orator, actor is he who contains always a crowded and critical audience in himself, and plays, speaks to that invisible house more than to any other, with unflagging vitality and determination in every assertion, flight, suggestion, hazarding, withdrawing, inquiring, rebuking moroseness, poetic,

&c. of an oration, as shown and ejected in the vocalism of every word expressing those parts — that is what makes the main of a great speaker.

"After a style of abandon and familiarity among those talked with in rooms, streets, the circle of friends &c. when stepped upon the platform, what a change! suddenly the countenance illumined, the breast expanded, the nostrils and mouth electric and quivering, the attitude imperious and erect — a God stands before you — the sound of the voice also joins in the wondrous transformation — it becomes determined, copious, resistless.

"The audience — every hearer, must strain just as hard to go along with you as you do in your oratory. To hurry and plough up the soil of your hearer, constantly dropping seed therein, to spring up and bear grain or fruit many hours afterwards, perhaps weeks and years afterwards."

He had an idea that different styles were needed in different sections of the country. He defines a style for the Northern and Eastern audiences, as "simple, intellectual, strong with not much or any ornament, full of subtle senses and meanings æsthetic, depending upon the hearer himself to pick the meat out of the nut-shells. Style for the West, more declamatory and direct, with natural abandon and passion, the very intensity of rudeness, power, and natural meanings, and the style for the South, rich, full of tracery, poetical allusions, figures,

musical strains flowing, but all of the very purest quality."

"A lesson must be supplied, braced, fortified at all points. It must have its facts, statistics, materialism, its relations to the physical state of men, nations, the body &c. and to money making and well being. It must have its intellectual completeness, its beauty, its reasoning to convince, its proofs, &c. And finally it must have its reference to the spiritual, to immortality, to the mystic in man, that which knows without proof, and is beyond materialism.

"A a great voice is attained also by the right diet and drink. Fat, gluttony, swilling beer, gin, soda, coffee, tea — these and the like of these, make the voice thick, put phlegm in the throat, cause coughing and irritation, sometimes very unseasonable and interruptive. Let the diet be vigorous and enough, but simple, drink water only. Such are the rigid pre-requisites of a great voice.

"From practising loud pieces with the voice, I have fallen into a serious fault of too strong and frequent emphasis, from repeating the Shakesperian passages, or Cæsar. This is to be carefully seen to. Practise the elementary sounds continually. A great style of reading or declaring has the secret, sane, non-theatrical quality of the style of nature's workmanship — it cannot afford to emphasize the bark, like the actors, preachers, lawyers and political congressmen &c. do, it reaches the souls of

men by pleasing channels, mysterious, penetrating, as the light, the air, beauty, the songs of birds reach the soul, without the soul being conscious of it. It does not startle. At first you find no remarkable attractions about the great master of orators, but yet there is something too — something you know not what — in the voice, in the easy, calm air, the very play of the lips, all the line of the face — the attitude at rest — at the outset, and for a minute or two no muscle of the body stirred, not a single one — only the muscles of the face — a strange light and life, however, darting from the eyes, and never for one moment intermitted; pretty soon, as some new point pays out, an almost imperceptible stir in that immobile body — in a minute more, perhaps the head shakes its hair as if away from the face, or as a horse tosses his mane, or a trained runner his head, when perhaps leaping, alactric upon the course, with irrepressible life and joy — now perhaps a silent pause, then that voice again, with vigor, but now the body co-operates, as a lover; soon a passage that seems to force its own way through every limb — not through the hands only, but through all the trunk, and through the feet, and anon a stern and harsh passage, crackling and smashing like a falling tree, many other passages of many different tones, but all converging sooner or later into the clear, monotonous voice, equable as water — sometimes direct addresses made to you, the hearer, without a pause

afterward, as if an answer was expected, then perhaps for many minutes total abstraction and travelling into other fields, the vocalism limpid, inspired, no account made of the material place, the audience, but only of that other more spiritual world in which the speaker is now roaming."

He dilates upon the beauty of the Italian voice, which compasses "the purest and most perfect cantabile, forms, or rather gathers the tone in the back of the mouth, and makes none of the fearful work with the mouth itself that gives such a distorted appearance to English singers. In the good Italian singer, the mouth, lips, cheek, &c. are at ease, perhaps illumined with a gentle smile even during astonishing vocal performances. What is done is draped, not evident to the hearer. The back of the mouth, the throat, great interior energy and muscular alertness are necessary, all under the espionage of a severe taste, permitting no extreme attempts, but pleasing and natural and simple effects — the glory of perfect art."

Speaking of how an audience is to be captured he describes how the internal and external powers of the speaker must co-operate. "Within, the memory, the fancy, the judgment, the passions, all are busy; without, every muscle, every nerve is exerted; not a feature, not a limb, but speaks. The organs of the body attuned to the exertions of the mind, through the kindred organs of the hearers, instantaneously, and as it were, with an electrical spirit, vibrate those

energies from soul to soul. Notwithstanding the diversity of minds in such a multitude, by the lightning of eloquence, they are melted into one mass, the whole assembly actuated in one and the same way, become as it were, but one man, and have but one voice."

He quotes Bulwer Lytton when he says: "All men are not born with genius, but every man can acquire purpose, and purpose is the marrow and backbone of genius — nay, I can scarcely distinguish the one from the other." "With purpose comes the grand secret of all worldly success, which some men call will, but which I would rather call earnestness."

"The importance of public speaking is to say something. A speech that proves nothing, but deals only in passionate appeals, cannot be effectual except on rare occasions; that is, when the facts which constitute the ground of the appeals are well known or have been previously established by proof."

He speaks of oratory as being something which requires years of consideration, citing Demosthenes devoting years of practice in the study of vocal expression; Cicero applying himself under the direction of the most eminent masters of the art, year after year with untiring assiduity; Chatham contending like those ancient orators with the difficulties of an infirm bodily constitution, and giving up a large portion of his time in his effort to acquire a free,

graceful, and forcible action. "Men witness the prodigies of oratory, they are themselves the victims of its power, and suppose it wholly a boon of heaven. They have no idea of the midnight study and the toil by day, the severe discipline, the long and patient training which the fruits of eloquence have cost in their production; such, for instance, as Brougham, who, to catch a proper power of expression, first locked himself up for three weeks to the study, night and day, of the single oration "on the crown," and then writing over fifteen different times his peroration before bringing it to its final shape."

Whitman subsequently carried out his views of composition in the writing of his poems. Few have any realization of the effort that he used in his endeavors always to get the exact word to express every shade of meaning he wished to convey. All of his manuscripts bear evidence in their erasures and interlineations of almost incredible deliberation.

Whitman never tired of studying the Greek masters. He speaks of Pericles: "He lightened, thundered and agitated all Greece. His eloquence had those piercing and all-lively strokes that reach the inmost soul, and his discourse left always an irresistible incentive, a kind of spur, behind it in the minds of his auditors. He had the art of uniting beauty with strength, and making even severity itself, and the kind of harshness with which he spoke against the flatterers of the people, popular. There was no resisting the

solidity of his arguments, or the sweetness of his words, whence it was said, that the goddess of persuasion, with all her graces, resided on his lips. He never spoke in public until he had besought the gods not to suffer any expression to drop from him either incongruous to his subject or offensive to the people. Whenever he was to appear in the assembly, before he came out of his house he used to say to himself, 'Remember Pericles, that thou art going to speak to men born in the arms of liberty; to Greeks, to Athenians.'"

He speaks of Phocion's "lively, close, concise style, which expressed a great many ideas in few words. He was a strong reasoner and by that means prevailed over the most sublime eloquence." He speaks of the Athenians as "lively, penetrating, and lovers of a hidden sense who valued themselves upon understanding an orator at half a word; and really did understand him. Phocion adapted himself to their taste, and in a matter of conciseness could surpass even Demosthenes."

In 1858 Whitman made this note: "It seems to me called for a revolution in American oratory, to change it from the excessively diffuse and impromptu character it has (an ephemeral readiness, surface animation, the stamp of the daily newspaper, to be dismissed as soon as the next day's paper appears), and to make the means of the grand modernized delivery of live modern orations, appropriate to America, appropriate

to the world. This change is a serious one, and if to be done at all, cannot be done easily. A great leading representative man, with perfect power, perfect confidence in his power, persevering, with repeated specimens, ranging up and down the States, such a man, above all things, would give it a fair start. What are your theories? Let us have the practical sample of a thing, and look upon it and listen to it, and turn it about for to examine it."

I find Whitman's thought about naturalism, solidity and honesty running all through his notes. He says: "The eloquent man is natural. His manner, his tones, his style, his argumentation, his feeling, his flight of fancy are all spontaneous results of his mind being fully occupied with his subject and with nothing else for the time being. A manner studied and artificial, tones that rise not from and correspond not with, the sentiments he utters; a style that attracts attention to itself and is not the transparent vehicle of his thoughts; reasoning that is far-fetched and fantastic, pathos that tends to start no tear because it finds no sympathy; and figures that neither elucidate nor adorn, constitute a mere parody of oratory, and fitted to provoke the mirth of wise men, if their disgusts did not stifle their laughter."

Of elocution and declamation, as commonly studied, he says: "They have spoiled more speakers than they have benefitted, for the artificial tones, postures, stretchings forth of the hands and heaven-

ward rolling of the eyes, exhibited by persons who attempt to put their elocution in practice, and their ambitious imitations of the speeches which they have parrotted for spouting, counterfeit nature more abominably than the great stiff, staring dolls that excite rustic wonder in the shop windows of a metropolitan hairdresser. One flash of real nature is worth a whole eternity of such mummery. If our attention to gesture and inflexion has been carried so far as to cure all awkwardness of tone and motion then we have really made a valuable acquisition. We can then give our feelings full play without the risk of ungracefulness; but if our art and practice in vocal gymnastics go not so far as to conceal themselves by becoming a second nature, we had better rest contented with that which nature has originally bestowed upon us, and which she will certainly not fail to display, if we honor her with the faith of true men.

"An eloquent man must be earnest and honest. His heart's desire is to communicate with the mind of his audience, to lay hold of it and wield it for some cherished purpose. Neither can his oratory be of the highest order unless his earnestness springs from thoroughly honest conviction and passionate love of truth. Let earnestness be pure and strong enough, and the man who is under its inspiration will never be chargeable with unlawful artifice or vain-glorious exhibition. The appropriateness of

every element in his discourse will be in direct proportion to the singleness and intensity of his desire to enforce trust. He does not talk as a mere talker, he says what he has to say and is content. He speaks as if his sole concern were the truth and pertinence, not the beauty and brilliancy of what he utters."

"There cannot be true eloquence without solid thought. Eloquence is not pretty sentences and ornate diction, neither is it, as some suppose, the power of dramatic anecdote, whether picturesque, pathetic, or ludicrous. Eloquence is not any of these, although they all may frequently, and with propriety, go along with it, but it is thought and demonstration clothed with sentiment, adorned as the goodly tree is, by the efflorescence of its own branches, not by garlands hung on, and above all, instinct with the fervor of a truth worshipper.

"Declamation that has no substratum of substantial mind work is mere literary syllabub, frothy, windy, and in large doses sickening."

Walt Whitman and Physique

By Thomas B. Harned

I HAVE referred to Whitman's habit of making notes and collecting scraps on a special topic and placing the same in a small scrap book or tying them up in a package by themselves. Among his literary property in my possession I find a package marked "Physique," somewhat similar to the one marked "Oratory" which I used in the preparation of my paper on Whitman and Oratory. The notes date back of the publication of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass,* and many of them were made in Whitman's early youth and are interesting in explaining his "long foreground somewhere" which Emerson insisted he must have had for such a book as appeared in 1855. These notes are voluminous. I shall use such parts of them, taken almost at random, as I may deem interesting — confining myself almost wholly to the notes themselves. Almost a text-book could thus be compiled on the subject of diet, abstinence, exercise, clothing and everything bearing upon the question of physical culture and development.

Whitman very early in life gave much attention to what was and is known as the Temperance cause. It is fair to assume that at one time he must have been a total abstainer. In 1842 he wrote and published a temperance novel called *Franklin Evans, the Inebriate,* which at the time had a large circulation. Strange to say no copy of it could be obtained anywhere after Whitman became famous. We told him we were scouring the earth for it, and he said he "hoped to God" we "would never find one." About two years ago I got a copy through a party who had been searching for it for years. It is a curio, fearfully and wonderfully made, of no literary or other value, and full of preaching and tragedy.

But Whitman did think much and wisely on the drink question. He classified the causes of intemperance as Physical, Mental and Moral. I am always glad to dwell upon this phase of Whitman's life because it has been so much misrepresented. Many to-day believe that he was a drunkard and debauchee — and some very kind and charitable persons attribute his long paralysis to this cause. We who were near him and can speak from actual knowledge know better. Whitman was extremely moderate in eating and drinking, and had none of the bad habits which some have attributed to him. This is why we provided for a thorough post-mortem, the report of the surgeons making which

has set this question at rest forever. But let me proceed with my transcript.

"1. Among the physical causes may be mentioned first, a weak, unstrung, and feeble organization, which, wanting the stimulus of warm blood, of a free circulation, and of quick transmissions of nervous energy, predisposes the individual to desire artificial excitements. What pity may we well feel for the flabby lymphatic half grown puny creatures, called men and women, of whom earth is full! What wonder that such morbid abortions are tempted to kindle within their sluggish systems some sparkles of genial life, by transient exhilaration!

"Next to a state of half-health, may prevalent habits of life be spoken of, as a predisposing cause of intemperance. Foul miasms from dirty streets, ill-ventilated and ill-lighted houses, deficient and bad food, absence of baths, irregular hours, producing alternate feverishness and torpor, which all but force the sufferers from these abuses to periodical stimulation.

"Overwork and idleness come next in the enumeration of the physical causes of intemperance. Incessant, monotonous drudgery produces an exhaustion of the muscular and nervous system, for which the natural cure is some powerful excitant. The sense of weariness which follows excessive labor is almost insufferable. And blame for the

drunkenness so common among the working classes of all countries, may fairly be referred back to the task-masters who compel this violation of natural laws, by the repugnant toil they impose.

"Closely connected with this cause, is the last which can now be mentioned. It is the want of sufficient rest and relaxation. How much that word Recreation means. Can we not learn from the observation of children what a surplus of bodily vigor can give? Had men more play, they would be too full from within of animal spirits ever to feel the need of external excitement.

"God's elixir of life is wondrously compounded of sunlight, and pure air and water; of the perfume of flowers, of music, and the continual change of hours and seasons.

"We drive each other to quaff the fiery mountain which bubbles up from hell, by robbing one another of the exhaustless animal joy, which our Creator would pour upon us from all living and moving things. To drink to fullness of the nectar which Nature distils, is to be intoxicated with health. Drunkenness is the exact opposite of this.

"2. Among the mental causes of Intemperance, may be placed first, the want of habits of observation and reflection. The active brain sends forth along the nerves of motion, a constant, invigorating impulse, and gathers up from the sensitive nerves ever varying impressions. An uneasy sense of latent

mental power makes the uncultivated man struggle against the brutal lethargy which he finds creeping over him. He delights in the quickening of his thoughts, which stimulants for the moment produce.

"Closely connected with this cause, a second may be found in the mechanical nature of most kinds of labor. A slight effort of mind is required to gain skill in a branch of industry; but afterwards, there follows but a series of repeated experiences. No new lessons are learned no new volitions made. Nature, gentle, by her living laws, would stimulate the mind to ever-fresh discoveries, and fresh inventions, which bring serene delight. But routine baffles the powers of thought; attention flags amidst unvarying toil; and reason is dizzied by the perpetual recurrence of the same petty details. Is it wonderful, that men so gladly escape from their noisy workshops, on to the high grounds of fancy and wit? Exciting drinks seem to set free their prisoned talents, open wide prospects, and break up the plodding crowd of common thoughts. Sad is it to be obliged to confess that in our present modes of labor, multitudes find their only hours of any thing like a poetic or ideal state of mind, when met to talk with boon companions.

"And this brings up to view a third mental cause of Intemperance. It is the want of constant, free intercourse with other minds. Conversation is one of the most delicious stimulants which life affords.

A new mind opened to us, is better than a novel. Our own familiar thoughts, reflected from one another's experience, seem to gain a new gloss and brightness. Images and echoes multiply the charm of sights and sounds. But how little opportunity life, as now arranged, allows for habitual intercourse of mind with mind. Untaught, dull from drudgery, prejudiced and proud men meet in society, oppressed with false shame and taciturn habits. Drink breaks down the barriers, brings them to an intellectual level, and quickens self confidence, while disarming criticism. Men filled with facts and suggestions, have a conscious wealth of mind; it is a delight to them; and they feel small temptation to seek the feverish visions of intemperance, which mock their less cultivated fellows with a show of thought. They drink too often of living springs to be deceived by a mirage.

"3. Among the moral causes of Intemperance comes first, that most prolific one, unhappy homes. How many a woman has been led to drown the degrading consciousness, that she has given her life to one unworthy of her, in the delirium of intoxication. Disappointment and despair in heartless marriage are too intolerable. And how many a man is driven to the club or the hotel, by the sneer, and the scowl, and petty usurpations of a wife. The dreariness of a home where the indifference and hate are the Penates, may well account for,

though they cannot excuse, a resort to temporary self-forgetfulness. Deprived of the most longed for sources of constant excitement in reciprocated love, how easy is the surrender to a transient joy. When home, too, is merely the place, as it too often is among the poor, where the weary partners come to pour out upon each other, or upon their children, the hoarded spleen of the day, and to aggravate by recriminations, care and anxiety already too oppressive, how tempting seems the careless revelry of the gin-shop and bar-room.

"A second, and a very common moral source of Intemperance, is the want of pure and ennobling public amusement. Even the savage shows in his passion for festive meetings, how strong is our instinct to seek social pleasures amidst a multitude. The civilized man manifests this tendency yet more. The mere presence of a crowd, gathered to behold a spectacle, is a powerful excitement, no matter how trifling is the occasion that summons them together, nor how wanting in genius and grace are the people. But most of our public gatherings are of a kind that leave a feeling of vacuity. The show and treat are pure. It is no wonder, then, that artificial stimulants are brought in to waken an enthusiasm, which the scene itself cannot give. There is a rude address to the senses in our amusements, rather than a delicate appeal to the imagination and taste, and through them to the judgment

and heart. We jostle each other in selfish scramble, because unaccustomed to refined joy. There is so little in the modes of the meeting to call out courtesy and high bred disinterestedness, that the chief thought is of selfish indulgence. The fit accompaniment of our holidays is the booth. And it need excite no surprise, that at the end of a day of pleasure, the heels of many are lighter than their heads."

I shall now transcribe Whitman's more fragmentary notes. Let it be remembered as I proceed that I depart from his verbalism practically nowhere, except to supply certain obvious connecting phrases required to impart to the notes some semblance of order. Indeed, Whitman's style is so evident that such an explanation would not seem necessary.

Whitman gave some attention to the study of vegetarianism, although there is no evidence that he ever adopted it. He notes that Sir Isaac Newton, when composing his celebrated treatise upon optics, confined himself to water and a vegetable diet, to which abstemious mode of living may be ascribed the great age of eighty-five, to which he attained. John Locke is instanced as another case of intellectual activity under like conditions. "Never eat or drink," says Walt Whitman, "to gratify the varieties of appetite, but merely to support nature. Nature

created our bodies hardy and robust and capable of resisting the common influences of cold and the fatigues necessary in the ordinary duties of life. Most of the diseases arise from effeminate life, or too great indulgence of the Passions. We enervate, and render ourselves inadequate for our duties, by a soft, inactive, luxurious mode of life. The man surrounded by plenty and superfluity, and by all the delights of existence, falls in the midst of them. Too close rooms by day and night,—too much nightly clothing—too little bodily exercise,—and that not in the rustic air."

This subject of exercise is given great emphasis. Whitman did not believe much in gymnasiums. "To sedentary persons, violent, sudden and fitful exercise is always injurious, and such are gymnastic performances. The exercise of the student should be regular, gentle, deliberate, always stopping short of fatigue. One hour's joyous walk with a cheerful friend, in street or field or woodland, will never fail to do a greater or more unmixed good, than double the time in the most scientifically conducted gymnasium in the world. There are individual cases where the gymnasium is of the most undeniable benefit, but the masses would be better for having nothing to do with it." A better receipt than the gymnasium is given — "eat moderately and regularly of plain nourishing food, well prepared; spend two or three hours every day in the open air regardless

of all weathers, in moderate untiring activities. Everyone knows that exercise of the body increases circulation of the blood. The violent exercises in gymnasiums, as almost if not universally conducted hitherto, produce a violent flow of blood, of nutrient particles, to the various muscles which are brought into most active exercise, and being carried thither faster than they can be taken up, unmixed harm is the result. Hence the lifelong disablements and even deaths which have resulted from gymnastic performances and other violent exercises. Thus it is that the sudden, violent, fitful, exhaustive exercise of ordinary gymnasiums is unwise, hurtful, dangerous. To derive from muscular exertion a high degree of health and manly vigor, it should be moderate, continuous, regular, in the open air, and should be pleasantly remunerative beyond the mere benefits of the exercise itself." Whitman was very emphatic in his views about walking. Here is a verbatim manuscript note: "The persistent exercise for developing and strengthening them, of the lower legs and of the ankles and feet. No example is yet seen (not in modern times hereabouts at any rate) of the power of endurance and performance of the legs — walking, running, leaping, supporting, etc. The legs have a great deal to do even with the accomplishment of the work of the whole of the other parts of the body and give grace and impetus to it. Walking, perfect walking, in man or woman, is a rare

accomplishment — more rare than fine dancing, and more desirable than the finest dancing. Who ever sees a woman walk perfectly? Who ever sees a man?"

Whitman believed that the art of swimming was as natural to man as it is useful and in some cases necessary for the preservation of life. "Cleanliness and exercise, both so necessary to health, are combined with a high degree of enjoyment in the practice of this art. The importance of frequent ablutions can scarce be overrated." He was almost a believer in water as a preventive of disease and in swimming as its most practical application. "Swimming is an exercise which brings more muscles into action than any other, and the body being supported by an equal pressure on every part the action is harmonious." I could write an essay on the art of swimming from the notes which I find, but can give the subject but passing notice.

Walt Whitman believed that hard study and good health could go together. He said: "Hard study is generally thought to be adverse to health and conversely unhealthy students are thought or think themselves to be identical with hard students. Paleness of countenance, nervous weakness and headache are cultivated or affected because they are supposed to indicate superior intellectual gifts. Dangerous fallacy which has cost many a good fellow his life. No man or woman either ever killed himself or herself with hard study. Not a bit of it. But

many a lazy fellow, fond of intellectual occupation with physical inaction, has fallen a victim to disordered digestion and crazed nerves, all the time laboring under the grievous mistake that he was one of those favorites of the gods who die young, because they are of too ethereal a temperament to stand the rude shock of such a miserable world as this. Why, the world is a brave world — worthy to be the dwelling place of the noblest creatures God ever made. It is too good for the simpleton who does not know how to take care of himself, who mistakes neglect of body for culture of mind, who goes moping and moaning about because his breakfast sits uneasily on his weakened stomach, thinking it to be proof that he is too delicate or too refined for the hardships of human condition. Up, man, dreamer, fool — go plunge into the health giving joy inspiring waves of yonder ocean, while summer lasts, take a cold shower bath in winter; walk long distances, if you have the time, swing dumb bells if you have not. Cold water, vigorous exercise, hard study — these are the conditions of moral, mental and bodily health. All kinds of devils, as well as the blue devils, flee before these mighty enchanters. Even the leader of them all, the old prince of darkness, fears dumb bells, cold water and an active brain more than he did Martin Luther's inkstand."

Whitman's youthful desire was, to use his own language, written in large letters as a preface to these

notes, "To present a case of the condition of Perfect Health." "A sound mind in a sound body ripening into perfect manhood. Longevity is but a law of nature. If we die early it is more likely to be our fault. Between the years of forty and sixty a man who has properly regulated himself may be considered in the prime of life. His mature strength of constitution renders him almost impervious to the attacks of disease and experience has given soundness to his judgment. His mind is resolute firm and equal. All his functions are in the highest order. He assumes mastery over business, builds up a competence on the foundation he has formed in early manhood, and passes through a period attended by many gratifications. Having gone a year or two past sixty he reaches a viaduct called the Turn of Life, which, if crossed in safety, leads to the valley of old age, round which the river winds. The system and powers having reached their utmost expansion, now begin to close like the flowers at sunset or break down at once. One injudicious stimulant, a single fatal excitement, may force it beyond its strength."

All that I have given in this fragmentary paper is intensely interesting to the student of *Leaves of Grass* — that poem of the body and the soul. We can see how these early thoughts shaped Whitman's life work. The perfect man and the perfect woman was

his dream of the ultimate end of creation. The man whom he aimed to put in his book was a perfect man — healthy, mentally and spiritually. That he lived his own life according to these practical views there can be no doubt. Let me close with a noble and significant note: "Between the ages of thirty-five and eighty may be the perfection and realization of moral life; rising above the previous periods in all that makes a person better, healthier, happier, more commanding, more beloved and more a realisee of love. The mind matured, the senses in full activity, the digestion even, the voice firm, the walk untired, the arms and chest sinewy and imposing, the hip joints flexible, the hands capable of many things, the complexion and blood pure, the breath sweet, the procreative power ever ready in man and the womb power in woman, the inward organs all sweetly performing their offices — during those years the universe presents its riches, its strength, its beauty, to be parts of a man, a woman. Then the body is ripe and the soul also and all the shows of nature attained and the production of thought in books."

Walt Whitman and His Second Boston Publishers*

AMONG the heaps of papers, manuscripts, and literary accumulations which were piled up in Walt Whitman's Mickle Street den, was a bundle of letters carefully tied together with rough brown string, and bearing on the outside the following label: "May 3 '82. Sent a budget of letters involving the Osgood *L of G* & Dist Atty business to Wm. O'Connor, Wash'n with request to forward to Dr. Bucke." Upon opening the package I discovered that it contained the subjoined "budget of letters." People often remarked about the confusion apparent in Whitman's room. As a matter of fact, he was very methodical, and all material relating to any one subject he habitually tied up in one package, arranged in an orderly manner. He could always locate any desired package at any time, and could go to the exact spot in the heaps and ferret it out. I have known him to do this repeatedly even in the dark.

The letters seem to me to be extremely valuable.

* His first Boston publishers were Thayer & Eldridge.

I have been asked to put them in shape for publication, so that students and lovers of Whitman may have authentic knowledge of the important episode in our poet's life to which they relate. I shall present them in their proper order of date, and shall only add comments of my own when I deem it necessary. I retain the letters in their simple form, in no way altering punctuation or phraseology.

In the early part of May, 1881, John Boyle O'Reilly, a personal friend and admirer of Whitman, wrote to him, saying that Osgood wished to see the copy of the new edition of *Leaves of Grass* which Whitman contemplated bringing out. May 8th, 1881, Whitman wrote on the back of the O'Reilly letter the following:

"My dear Mr. Osgood

"I write in answer to the note on the other side from my dear friend O'Reilly. My plan is to have all my poems down to date, comprised in one volume under the name *Leaves of Grass*. I think it will have to be in brevier (or bourgeous) solid. I want it plain, but as fine a specimen in type, paper, ink, binding &c as bookmaking can produce. A book of about 400 pages to sell at $3. Not for luxury however but for solid wear, reading, use. The text will be about the same as hitherto, occasional slight revisions simplifications in punctuations &c a more satisfactory order — some new pieces (20 or 30 pages)—

"*Fair warning on one point, the sexuality odes about which the original row was started and kept up so long are all retained and must go in the same as ever.*

"Should you upon this outline wish to see the copy I will place it in your hands.

"WALT WHITMAN."

The lines which I have italicized are the keynote of this matter. It will be noted that Whitman was approached first on the subject of the publication by Osgood through O'Reilly, and that he was absolutely fair and explicit at the outset about the "sexuality odes."

Osgood immediately responded to Whitman's letter, acknowledging its receipt and saying:

"Please send on the copy as soon as you can and we will make careful estimates as to its size, style, etc., and give you our views. So far as I understand it this proposed new edition will supersede all other previously published volumes — am I correct? and please tell me if the plates of the original *Leaves of Grass* as published by Thayer and Eldridge so many years ago are still in existence. I am sorry I was absent from Boston during your visit: I should have been glad to renew the acquaintance I had with you in the old Pfaff days."

Whitman promptly replied:

"Yes — a new one vol edition would supersede all others, not only legally (I am sole owner of the copyright which I have kept thoroughly fortified from the beginning) but by superiority, additions and coming down to date. The Thayer & Eldridge of 1860 plates are in existence, are in the hands of R. Worthington N. Y. (a bad egg) who has sold languid, surreptitious copies —

can be stopt instantly by me & will be & he knows it (the matter is not of any moment however)."

Later in the month, May 28th, Osgood urged the sending of the copy "this week." He said: "I sail for Europe in a fortnight and would like to come to some understanding in the matter before leaving."

The copy was sent on by mail, May 27th, 1881. Whitman wrote later:

"I suppose you rec'd the copy Saturday as I sent it the previous day. You already have my plan a volume of say 400 pages (not over 450) handy size — unexceptionable, (but I know you would n't issue any other) paper, print binding but markedly plain and simple even to Quakerness — I have a desire that all through even in capitalization — punctuation &c it shall be so — no sensationalism about it, no 'luxury' — a book for honest wear and use, honestly bound especially no 'ornament' — retail at $3. The book has not hitherto been really published at all — all these previous doings have been reconnoisances — printings in proof for zealous friends. The British market is an important consideration. The copy I sent will have to be looked over by me very carefully again for punctuations & minor technicalities as I did not wait to complete those. But I reserve all this further until I hear your definite decision on the main point — the publication."

Osgood promptly responded, May 31st:

"Your copy came duly to hand and we have considered the matter, and should be glad to publish the book, provided we can meet your views as to terms. Our proposition would be to assume all the risk and pay you the usual royalty of ten per cent

of the retail price on all copies sold. The question of retail price is one that needs thought. It seems to us that the price you name ($3.00) is possibly rather high. Perhaps $2.00 or 2.50 would yield a better return to both you and us. But this point we can settle later. Kindly let me know if the terms we offer are agreeable to you. I should like to hear at once, as I expect to sail for Europe next week, and should be glad to know before going, both that we may make our plans for the book here, and that I may see what can be done abroad. Tell me what your views are about the English sale. My notion would be that we should sell an edition there, if possible, printed here from our own plates and subject to your royalty. Will this suit you? We should like to feel clear that you can control the old Thayer & Eldridge plates, so as to stop the issue of any books printed from them."

Whitman's reply to this was terse and characteristic:

"Thanking you warmly for willingness promptness &c my terms are 25 cents on every copy sold if the retail price is put at $2 — 30 cents on every copy sold if the retail price is put at $2.50. If these suit you the bargain is settled, you shall be fully fortified as sole publisher & with all legal authority & you can act accordingly in England. If they do not suit no harm done — the thing is off but with perfect good feeling on both sides."

The acceptance came at once:

"We accept your terms, viz., 25 cents per copy on all sold if the price is $2.00 and 30 cents if $2.50. We shall not wish to publish until autumn, but should like to receive the copy whenever you are ready so that the work of making the plates will be going on during the summer. Please write me care of Trübner

& Co., 57 Ludgate Hill, London, giving any suggestions about the publication in England. I shall need for that purpose especially to know how far this edition differs from previous ones, and particularly how much new matter it contains. When the copy is ready send it directly to the firm."

It will be interesting to note that the spurious edition issued by Worthington from the Thayer & Eldridge plates was not suppressed. This caused no end of annoyance to Whitman. Many copies were sold, and the plates were thus used until after the poet's death, when they were purchased by the estate. They are now in the possession of the literary executors. There are no copies of this edition on the market.

Whitman always had a great liking for this book, and while it has been superseded by later editions, it yet performed an important part in the evolution of *Leaves of Grass*. Every student of Whitman should own a copy if possible.

In the early part of June, Whitman recognized the conclusion of the contract. As a practical printer he gave minute directions. He wrote:

"Yours of 3d rec'd which settles the engagement. I shall forward the copy soon. The name will be *Walt Whitman's Poems* with the sub-title *Leaves of Grass* in its place or places inside. I suggest a 400 page book in size, thickness, general appearance &c closely like Houghton & Mifflin's 1880 edition of *Owen Meredith's Poems,* only better paper and print — I think solid bourgeois or long primer (only to be new type) page same

size as the *Owen Meredith*, with the same rather narrow margin, (which I prefer) — in the making up everything the reverse of spacing out or free leading though of course not crowding close either but compacting the matter (for there is quite a good deal to go in the 400 pages) pale green muslin binding costing say 14 to 15 cents no gilt edges — a handsome stately plain book —) I shall get a new copyright here for this forthcoming edition) — I shall probable write you to London about the English sale. Can I get a British Copyright by going to Canada? If so I will go. How would the enclosed picture do for a frontispiece? It is made by Gutekunst 712 Arch St. Philadelphia."

A few days later he further wrote:

"Would you have set up for me from the copy enclosed two sample pages size of the accompanying diagram — I think — am pretty sure — it, the book 400 pages about will go in long primer solid. But I would like to have a solid page in bourgeois too. I hope it will be new type. The typographical part of my poems — how they shall in type produce the best effect always — is my idea in making them."

The publishing house followed Whitman's directions, and on June 10th forwarded three sample pages of the size indicated. June 16th Whitman wrote:

"I have been down in the Jersey woods the last ten days — just returned — have finished my copy which is now ready to put in hand — all plain sailing & all complete — When do you want to begin setting up & will it go ahead pretty fast when actually begun? I have spoken about the type — it ought to be new or substantially new long primer. I sent on the proof page for a little change last night on my return."

These new proofs were sent and Whitman said:

"Specimen pages rec'd — seems to be just about right. My copy will come in about 400 pages of it, perhaps a trifle more. Copy is all ready. Shall come on personally with it as soon as you are prepared to begin the typesetting. Please make the arrangements & write me forthwith."

Osgood & Co., June 25th, wrote:

"We are ready at your convenience to go on with the type setting. It will hardly pay you to stay here the whole time, as it will take some weeks, and proofs can as well go to you at Camden as elsewhere. If you desire to personally oversee the beginning (or all if you prefer) shall be happy to see you at any time, & do our best to facilitate matters."

Whitman's careful attention to details is illustrated in his letter of July 17th, in which he said:

"I am unwell from the heat — and several little things happening — pretty well shattered anyhow — am busy with the copy of the book — thought I had finished — but I find it will bear about as much work as I can put on it (I can't hurry). Still it is in printing office shape. How will it do to have this definite understanding that I come on by first of September to Boston — & we make a steady start with it at once — then the thing ought to be put through in two months say by the end of October — I was thinking something might be done with extra bound copies for the holiday book trade of 81 & 2. Couldn't we get it out first of November if I am on hand in Boston with the copy complete 1st Sept."

The publishers at once notified him:

"We can start the book whenever you wish, and should consider six to eight weeks sufficient time for it. When ready we should of course bind up some of them in leather for holiday sales and hope to do well with them."

Whitman's ability to take care of his own rights is fully demonstrated in his letter of September 12th. Messrs. Osgood & Co. had sent on a proposed agreement for signature, and Whitman replied as follows:

"The documents rec'd, but I cannot agree or convey copyright as therein specified. You of course must be thoroughly fortified in your investment & publication of the book & I will do anything to secure you to your fullest satisfaction, if not already — which I thought the case distinctly — amply — legally secured by letters in the correspondence between us ante, but the copyright of *Leaves of Grass* must remain absolutely & solely in my own hands as hitherto. The steel engraving just as good as new I send herewith. It is required in the text (to face page 29) in fact is involved as part of the poem. If desired I will sell it to you as a necessary part of the stock for issuing the book price $50 cash and 20 copies of book (without royalty). I shall want 200 prints from the plate also, the printer can make that number extra and give me.—The book will make ab't 300 pages, seems to me every way best for us both that it should be put at $2 — it can well be afforded at that price. Before any adv'tment or anything of the kind about *L of G* let me be consulted — show to me first. Don't forget carefully attending to the English Copyright, as we concluded about it the other day. I want to say over again that while I reserve to the fullest degree all my own rights and the means to maintain them you are to be & I hereby make you the sole issuers and publishers of my completed *Leaves of Grass* — that I shall cooperate strenuously & loyally in

the enterprise & to add that I do not fix any term or limit of years because it is my wish that the publication by you on the conditions and payments of royalty already settled may while those conditions are fulfilled continue on and on quite indefinitely & without limit as being (I hope) better for you & better for me too. Should you wish anything more in detail let me know, of course any further points, specifications &c. that may arise as time elapses or as circumstances or our wishes require, are open to both of us to be added, modified revoked or what not as we may join and agree."

The proposition to sell the steel plate was accepted by the publishers, but they thought that there ought also to be in the book a portrait of the author "as now." They added:

"As to the form of contract sent you, we sent it because it was our usual form and in pursuance of our usual custom. We do not care about it in that form. Your letter is sufficient guarantee of your wishes and intentions. But we think it would be wise to have a specific time settled for the contract to continue, and beyond that to let it be terminable by either party on certain conditions."

Whitman was opposed to any further portrait, and advised that the additional portrait be

"kept for a further issue — perhaps a year or two from now. Besides we would have to hurry too much — for I think the book better be thrown on the market forthwith — apparently all the favorable stars are in conjunction just now. The press work (which I hope will be very carefully done, with good ink) & binding color style &c (strong plain, inexpensive, is my notion, nothing fancy) are now about to be prepared for immediately;

and the plate printing to be at once put in hand. The book will not make more than 390 pages. I am in favor of its being so trimmed & bound that it will be as Eligible as possible for the pocket and to carry about & I am not in favor of wide margins. I have no objection to any specific time for the contract to continue if you wish. I think of calling Friday noon 16th at your place."

Whitman then went to Boston and personally supervised the publication. While there a formal agreement was entered into between him and his publishers. It is manifestly composed by Whitman. I find the original among the papers and I set it forth in full:

"The agreement hereby made by and between the undersigned compacts that Walt Whitman endows James R. Osgood & Company for ten years from this date with the sole and exclusive privilege of issuing and publishing his, the said Whitman's, poems of *Leaves of Grass*, in one volume, at the price of Two Dollars — that said Osgood & Company shall pay for that privilege to said Whitman twenty-five cents royalty on every copy of said *Leaves of Grass* sold, said payments to be made to said Whitman on the first day of January and the first day of July of every year — that the copyright remains vested solely in said Whitman — that said Osgood & Company shall have the privilege of publishing the said *Leaves of Grass* in any other more costly form by paying said Whitman at the same rate of royalty before specified — that said Whitman, holding also the British copyright, endows the said Osgood & Company, as far as he legally can, with the same rights and privileges in Great Britain, on the like conditions of royalty before specified, and for the same period of time — that any future points of agreement,

or modification of this agreement, may be made at any time by amicable and written consent of both parties — and finally that at the end of ten years this contract may be continued at the pleasure of the undersigned — or their heirs or assigns.

"Made and executed this first day of October, A.D. 1881.

"WALT WHITMAN.

"JAMES R. OSGOOD & Co."

While in Boston Whitman opened up a correspondence about the English edition with Trübner & Co., of London. He wrote them, October 5th, as follows:

"Osgood & Co. of this city who have set up & electrotyped a new complete & markedly fuller Edition (with several new pieces) of my *Leaves of Grass* inform me that by first issuing & bona fide selling in Great Britain, I can take out a copyright there for this edition (such as it is) we therefor send you a few copies at once with the request that you will immediately have the book entered for copyright & secured in my name — (immediately after which the work will be published here). I am under many obligations in the past to my friend your Josiah Child & should like to have him write to me about it direct as of old, to Camden, New Jersey."

Trübner's reply is not in the material relating to this matter and I am in doubt as to what action they took. They were probably favorable to Whitman at first, and then dropped him, as I find that Ticknor wrote Whitman, December 10th, 1881, saying:

"We had already heard of Mess. Trübner's change of base

and Boyne's acceptance of the books, but we are inclined to think it has been for good, rather than otherwise, as we received yesterday from Boyne a cable order for 250 copies more. I think we on this side can stand *that* if Trübner can."

When the book was ready for issue Whitman returned to Camden. Complimentary copies were sent to leading journals and magazines and to a few personal friends of the author. Whitman for the first time fully realized that he had secured a publisher of national reputation. Mr. Ticknor, of the publishing house, wrote him November 14th:

"The book starts well and is already receiving the correct mingling of voices in the chorus that is arising over it."

In this same letter Mr. Ticknor asked a personal favor, which is worth quoting:

"I want to ask, if you could by way of a latter day benefaction to some survivors of the army that you devoted your labors of love to nearly twenty years ago — let me have some little thing for the paper to be published during the Fair of which I enclose a circular? It 's a noble object to get the remaining fellows out of the almshouses and into a home of their own. I am doing what little I can & among other things helping to get contributions for *The Sword and the Pen* — so the paper is to be called. If you can help me it will please me much and aid the cause more."

In 1876 Whitman set up with his own hands, in a printing house in Camden, his Centennial Edition.

He desired to sell such part of this edition as he had on hand, and in December he wrote his publishers:

"I have a few copies remaining (between one & two hundred) of my old $10 Centennial Autographic two volume personal edition moderately sought after by collectors and specialists — mostly in England — which I should like to sell whenever applied to price $10. You have no objection to my selling them? I don't think it will affect the new edition at all unfavorably — probably do more good than harm — is not of much importance anyhow — but will put a few dollars into my pocket now and then which I need — Shall not sell them if you object."

The publishers gave him permission to sell them, which he continued to do. The Osgood firm received an inquiry made by J. H. Johnston (a personal friend of the poet), about the sale of the book, and answered:

"It has had a fair success so far. We have printed three editions, 2000 copies in all, and it is selling steadily. It is not a 'boom' nor can it be regarded as likely to produce any very large results to author or publisher. At the same time it seems likely to be the source of a steady though moderate income."

Whitman's friends were delighted with his promised prosperity, although the poet was unruffled. He had always accepted sunshine and shadow, health and sickness, failure and success, censure and praise, with that calmness which was a dominant trait in his character.

From the time of the publication to early in

March, 1882, I find no further correspondence. I have given with unnecessary detail perhaps all the facts relating to the publication. What follows has relation to the official interference by the District Attorney of Boston, which led to the abandonment of Whitman by his Boston publishers.

March 1st, 1882, Whitman's publishers received a letter from Oliver Stevens, the District Attorney of Boston, notifying them that *Leaves of Grass* was officially classified by him with obscene literature. They conveyed the intelligence to Whitman, under date of March 4th, in the following language:

> We enclose a letter from the District Attorney, dated March 1st, and received by us yesterday, March 3d. Please read and return it, keeping copy of it if you so desire. We are not at present informed what portions of the book are objected to. We are, however, naturally reluctant to be identified with any legal proceedings in a matter of this nature. We are given to understand that if certain parts of the book should be withdrawn its further circulation would not be objected to. Will you advise us whether you would consent to the withdrawal of the present edition and the substitution of an edition lacking the obnoxious features?"

The letter of the District Attorney I print entire:

> "COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,
> "DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, BOSTON,
> "24 COURT HOUSE, *March 1st, 1882.*
>
> "MESSRS. JAS. R. OSGOOD & CO.:
>
> *Gentlemen:* Our attention has been officially directed to a

certain book entitled '*Leaves of Grass:* Walt Whitman' published by you.

We are of the opinion that this book is such a book as brings it within the provisions of the Public Statutes respecting obscene literature, and suggest the propriety of withdrawing the same from circulation and suppressing the editions thereof.

"Otherwise the complaints which are proposed to be made will have to be entertained.

"I am yours truly,

"OLIVER STEVENS,

"*Dist. Att'y.*"

Whitman's entire fairness in the matter, his good feeling towards his publishers, is evidenced in the manner of his attempt to meet the threat contained in the foregoing letter. He evidently did not realize the extent of the demand, and believed that the concession of a very few changes would satisfy the official mind. This letter is important, as it furnishes the only instance in Whitman's career in which he showed the slightest disposition to modify for external reasons text otherwise chosen. We find him saying, under date of March 7th:

"I am not afraid of the District Attorney's threat — it quite certainly could not amount to anything — but I want you to be satisfied, to continue as publishers of the book, (I had already thought favorably of some such brief cancellation.) Yes, under the circumstances I am willing to make a revision and cancellation in the pages alluded to — would n't be more than half a dozen any how — perhaps indeed about ten lines to be left out & a half dozen words or phrases.

"Have just returned from a fortnight down in the Jersey woods & find your letter.

"Let this whole matter be kept quiet in the house — no talk or information that may lead to newspaper items — the change to be just silently made — the book, & at casual view all its pages, to look just the same — only those minutely looking detecting the difference. Inform the official people at once confidentially that the cancellation is to be made for future editions.

"Write me at once and definitely, if all this suits."

Whitman had received no reply by the middle of the month and naturally developed some anxiety concerning the circulation of his book. He therefore despatched a note of inquiry, March 19th:

"Have been expecting response to my letter sent you some twelve days ago, (March 8) but no word recd. Are there any newer developments? Are you still proceeding with the sale of the book? I re-affirm my suggestions and disposition of March 8."

The publishers were evidently consulting with the District Attorney to ascertain the extent of his objections. They held in view a possible arrangement or compromise of the difficulty. In the meantime Doctor Bucke — at this time and since one of Whitman's closest friends — had written to Osgood & Co., proposing that they should publish his *Life of Whitman,* which was then just finished. The Messrs. Osgood wrote to Whitman on the subject:

"Please read the enclosed from Doctor Bucke and return it with the expression of your wishes in the matter. We do not know whether the book would appeal to us commercially, but we of course prefer not to look at it without first being sure that it meets your approval. We are awaiting for an official indication in the matter of revisions."

Whitman's reply was extremely interesting. He gave his opinion of Doctor Bucke and his projected book. He then proposed that Osgood & Co. should undertake the publication of his prose works. At this time he still regarded the District Attorney business as a small matter and anticipated no trouble. Let me print the whole letter:

"Yours of 20th rec'd, about Dr. Bucke's book. I know something about it, and do not object.

"Dr. B has spent considerable on the illustrations (I have seen them, they are quite creditable,) has gathered a variety of biographical information, criticises my poems from an almost passionately friendly point of view, (as scientist, student of poetry, medical doctor, &c.) — and has included what as time goes on will prove a curiously valuable collection of cumulative opinions on *L of G.*, from 1856 to the present day.

"I should say it would be a safe publication enterprise, but you must of course judge & decide for yourself.

"Another thing I must broach — hoping you are not alarmed at the District Attorney episode (as I am not at all) — but see your way clear to continue on in earnest.

"I have about got into shape a volume* comprising all my *prose writings,* to be called (probably)

* "*It,* at least will not be liable to any District Attorney episode," Whitman wrote parenthetically.

Specimen Days & Thoughts

by W W

to be about same size as *L of G.* This little District Att'y flurry blowing over & we getting things into good shape — (as of course I suppose it surely will & we will) — would you bring it out, say late this summer, same time as the *L of G.*

"So you see there may be three Vols gyrating together, the *L of G,* the *S D & T,* & Dr. Bucke's book.

"Upon the whole, as my friend seems determined to bring out his book, I hope you will take it. I know Dr. Bucke well & have for some years. He is a perfectly honorable, reliable, solid man to deal with — a linguist, well conversant with the best German, French and British poetry — of English stock and birth, but grown up in Canada & the California regions of America, & combining in my opinion the best traits of both nationalities. He is now & has been for some years (in fact he built up & organized it) at the head of the largest and most complete & modernized Asylum for the Insane in America — one of the largest in the world, 1000 persons under his charge — near London, Canada. Though enthusiastic he has a careful eye to practical and business responsibilities — he has a fine large family of children, and a first-rate professional citizen and social reputation in Canada."

The next letter from Boston showed that the District Attorney meant business. Osgood & Co. wrote, March 21st:

"Since our letter of yesterday we have received a memorandum of the passages and lines which are recommended to be expunged. Please look it through (we enclose it in detail) and advise us at your earliest convenience whether the suggestions meet your approval. In case they do we shall then proceed to

consider the mechanical difficulties in the way and how far and how easily they may be overcome."

(A list of the passages objected to was appended.)

Whitman replied instantly. He still desired to conciliate the legal mind, and wrote more definitely about his proposed changes:

"Yours of the 21st received with the curious list — I suppose of course from the District Attorney — of 'suggestions' lines and pages and pieces &c. to be 'expunged.' The list whole and several is rejected by me, and will not be thought of under any circumstances.

"To give you a definitive idea of what I meant in my notes of March 8 and March 19, — and of course stick to — I mail you with this a copy of *L of G,* with the not numerous but fully effective changes and cancellations I thought of making: See pages 84 88 89 90.

"All lines and passages marked in pencil to come out and their places to be exactly filled with other matter — so that the pages will superficially present the same appearance as now. The whole thing would not involve an expense of more than from 5 to $10.

"My proposition is that we at once make the revision here indicated, & go on with the regular issue of the book. If then any further move is made by the District Attorney and his backer, — as of course there is somebody behind it all — they will only burn their own fingers, & very badly. I want the paper copy I send of *L of G* returned to me when through."

I have made diligent but unsuccessful search for the copy of *Leaves of Grass* which Whitman sent to

Boston with his proposed changes. It was returned to him, but has either been lost or given away. We may well be curious to know just how far he was willing to go with these tenders of peace. I think Whitman half regretted that he ever offered to concede anything. I find among his papers this note, written in red ink, in his hand, on a copy of his letter of March 23d:

"By this letter of W. W. March 23 several minor changes and alterations words and lines in two or three cases are consented to in *Children of Adam* but J. R. O. and the officials not considering them as at all meeting the point they are entirely waived on both sides."

It is quite evident that the publishers thought that Whitman's concessions were wholly insufficent. The District Attorney was willing to compromise the matter on the basis of the proposition expressed in the following letter from Osgood & Co. to the author:

"We do not think the official mind will be satisfied with the changes you propose. They seem to think it necessary that the two poems, *A Woman Waits for Me* and *Ode to a Common Prostitute,* should be omitted altogether. If you consent to this we think the matter can be arranged without any other serious changes."

Whitman not replying at once, his publishers anxiously telegraphed him April 5th:

"We are awaiting answer to our letter of March 29. Book suffering from delay."

Whitman's answer was calm, firm, and characteristic:

"No, I cannot consent to leave out the two pieces. I am only willing to carry out my letter of March 23d."

The surrender and abandonment came in the publishers' reply:

"We have laid before the District Attorney the alterations proposed by you. They are not satisfactory.

"The argument is as follows: If there is a case against the book in its existing form it is not removed or weakened by the changes you propose. If there is no case there is no need of making these changes.

"We do not attempt to express an opinion on the point of whether there *is* a case against the original book. But we certainly do think that if there *is* such a case it would lie with almost equal force against the book after the modifications proposed by you have been made.

"As we said at the outset, we do not wish to go into Court in connection with this case. Therefore, as your views seem to be irreconcilable with those of the official authorities, there seems no alternative for us but to decline to further circulate the book. We should be open to any reasonable arrangement for turning the plates over to you."

Whitman's answer, April 12th, was dignified and without reproach:

"Yours of 10th just rec'd — If you desire to cease to be the

publishers of *Leaves of Grass,* unless I make the excisions required by the District Attorney — if this is your settled decision — I see indeed no other way than 'some reasonable arrangement for turning the plates over' to me. What is the royalty due me according to contract from the sales altogether? and what is your valuation of the plates?"

The correspondence that follows has relation to the settlement of their business relations. It is interesting as showing the straightforward dealings between the parties. April 13th Osgood & Co. wrote:

"Up to the present time the royalty due to you on the sales of the book amounts to $405.50. In this we include 400 copies sent to England, which we assume to be sold, but the sale of which is uncertain.

"The plates have cost us about $475, including the steel portrait, and we have on hand about 225 copies of the book in sheets — none bound.

"We are willing to turn over to you the plates, the steel portrait, and the copies on hand in sheets without charge, you giving us a receipt in full for the amount due you for royalty.

"It is perhaps not an important matter, but as your letter seems to imply that this possible change is the result of a 'settled decision' on our part, we feel it right to say that it is not we who have fixed inflexible conditions under which this matter could be decided. These conditions have been fixed by yourself, and they appear to be such as to obviate the possibility of compromise."

Whitman did not hurry the matter. May 4th the publishers again addressed him:

"We beg to confirm our letter of 13th April, to which we have received no reply. Inasmuch as calls for the book in small numbers are coming to us from day to day, and under the circumstances we find ourselves unable to fill them, it seems to us that in the interest of all concerned, this matter should be settled speedily."

Mr. Ticknor called on Whitman, in Camden, May 17th, 1882, and the final severance was signed. As I printed the agreement of publication, I now print the agreement of surrender:

"*Camden, N. J., May 17, 82.*

"Memorandum of Agreement between James R. Osgood & Co., of Boston, Mass., & Walt Whitman, of Camden, N. J. J. R. O. & Co. agree to surrender to W. W. the plates, dies, steel portrait, and 225 copies (more or less), in sheets of *Leaves of Grass,* and pay W. W. the sum of $100.00 in cash.

"W. W. agrees to accept the same in lieu of all claims for copyright, &c., in full.

"The publication of said work to be discontinued by J. R. O. & Co., the contract for the same to be cancelled, & no copies to be issued hereafter with their imprint.

"James R. Osgood & Co.
"Walt Whitman."

The settlement was faithfully carried out. The money was paid. The plates were turned over to Whitman and are now owned by the estate. All subsequent editions have been printed from these plates with practically no changes whatever, and their use will be continued.

The publishers always regretted this outcome. I appropriately close this correspondence with a letter, dated May 20th, in which Mr. Ticknor expresses his feeling in the matter:

"I am extremely sorry for the *contretemps* which has caused the change, but I am very glad of opportunity I have had of personal acquaintance with you. Hope to retain your good-will in spite of our compulsory business separation."

The narrative is closed. I have abstained from expressing any personal opinions. The letters tell the whole story. Whitman's friends were at the time furious, denouncing loudly the unjust interference of the District Attorney and the cowardice of the publishing house in offering no show even of defense of the principle of freedom in literary publication. Throughout all Whitman was unruffled, and he never harbored any animosity against the publishers. I leave the question of publishing-house ethics for others to determine. I have been reliably informed that the District Attorney in later years admitted that he had not sufficiently acquainted himself with the character of the book before taking action — that he probably would never have made it a subject of official complaint if this had been done.

Probably the real power — or man — back of the whole business will never be known. Apart from the light they throw upon the historic, personal

aspects of the episode generally, the letters specifically reveal in this many-sided man in relations of trade an ability to take all needful care of his own interests. I place them here in this serial connection in the confidence that their great value will be appreciated.

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